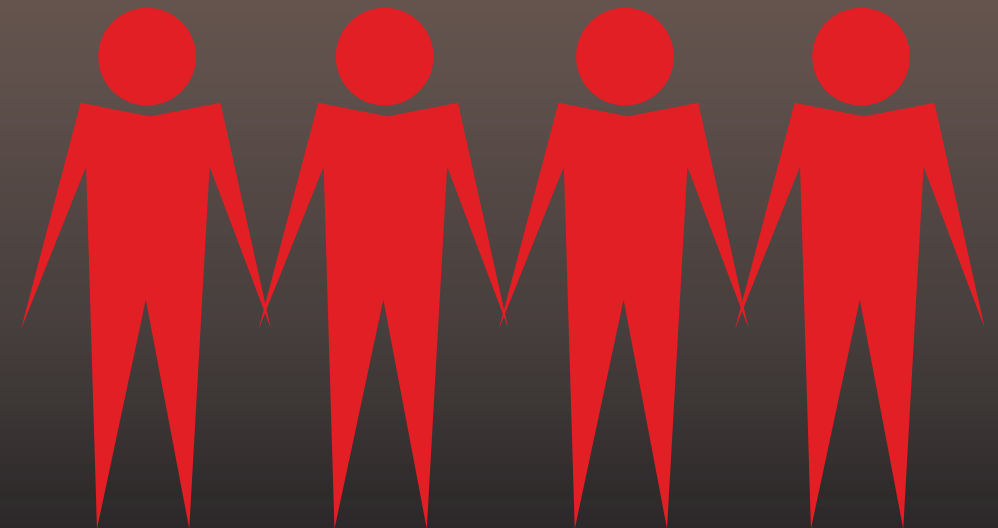


G E M S

God's Ecumenical Ministry, Shared

A MANUAL FOR PERSONS INVOLVED
IN ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY



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God's Ecumenical Ministry, Shared

**GEMS: God's Ecumenical Ministry, Shared
A Manual for Persons Involved in
Ecumenical Shared Ministry**

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Members and Contributors Include:

American Baptist Churches

Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The United Methodist Church

United Church of Christ

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Preface

Ecumenical Shared Ministries (ESMs) are those congregations who are yoked, federated, union or united congregations, and those congregations served by a minister of another denomination. This manual has been prepared for pastors and lay people of congregations who describe themselves as, or are considering, an ESM. The manual is also for judicatory officials who seek help in relating their denominations to this unique form of local congregation.

We wish to express deep appreciation to the over 200 persons who have contributed to this manual. Some have assisted through denominational or ecumenical writing groups and others by their participation in the first ever national gathering of lay and clergy associated with ESMs. This event, known as The Syracuse Consultation, was held in Syracuse, New York in the winter of 1996. The group that gathered carefully critiqued the first draft of this document. This final product has been developed through the experience and needs of those most closely involved in this type of ministry.

GEMS (God's Ecumenical Ministry, Shared), or parts of it, may be duplicated as needed. Its loose-leaf format is designed to ease its usage and allow for periodic updates as necessity dictates. If you wish more information about ESMs, or if you would like to offer any critique or suggestions for GEMS, contact the appropriate national staff person or ecumenical officer of your denomination.

An Introduction

By Michael Kinnamon

Ecumenical Shared Ministries are part of the one ecumenical movement. What do we mean when we make reference to the "ecumenical movement"? The following eight points may help us answer that question. They were presented at the 1st National Consultation for Ecumenical Shared Ministries held in Syracuse, NY in 1995.

1. The Unity we seek through the ecumenical movement is a gift of God, the One made known in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and is not, therefore, the product of a human urge for community. The goal of the ecumenical movement, if properly understood, is not to unite our diversity but to celebrate and learn from the diverse character of our given oneness. If we begin by emphasizing our differences, then community is generally conceived of as peaceful coexistence and will last as long as our interests are perceived to coincide. But the point of the gospel is that those who confess Christ, of whatever nation or culture or language or theological worldview, are already related by blood. This is not an option on which we get to vote. It is the Word we are called to embody and proclaim.

2. Since the ecumenical movement seeks a unity that is rooted in the renewal of the church, it can never be content with interchurch cooperation. Over the past two generations in the United States, denominational hostilities have been replaced by some level of respect and cooperation. But it is pretty clear that this has more to do with the society's notions of tolerance and the inviolability of "private" belief than with a sense of the Church catholic. The ecumenical claim is not that Christians should learn to get along, but that we need each other if we are to be the Church, that we are given one another in order to be the Church. Cooperation can actually freeze the status quo in place and, thus, undermine the impulse for renewal. All this explains the lessening of ecumenical enthusiasm in North America. People will give their lives for the sake of a gospel vision of wholeness, but not for the sake of cooperation aimed at efficiency.

3. Since the ecumenical movement is rooted in a vision of peace and justice for all of God's creation, its agenda can never be limited simply to the Church. One of the movement's profoundest insights (now commonplace) is that the Church doesn't have a mission, God's mission has the Church. The favored ecumenical passage used to be John 17:21; but today the text I see most often quoted is Ephesians 1:10—God's plan to gather up (reconcile) all things in Christ, a plan in which we, the Church, are privileged to participate.

4. Since the unity we have in Christ is for the sake of our witness in the world, it cannot be understood only as a future hope or as an invisible spiritual reality. The Church, whether it wants to or not, makes a witness not only by what it says and does but by what it is, by the way it lives.

5. The ecumenical movement seeks, through a sharing of theological gifts, to understand the truth of God's will more fully. It is not served, therefore, by efforts to minimize or ignore theological differences. One of the craziest ideas perpetuated in the name of ecumenism is that unity is synonymous with agreement. Christians aren't one because we agree with one another — which would be a form of works righteousness, as if our agreement created the Church. It is precisely because we recognize that we are related by water and blood that we seek deeper, truer common vision through the sharing of differences.

6. The ecumenical movement must make a difference in the way Christians live their lives in local communities; it is not simply an international phenomenon. This is obvious, I suppose, but there is a related principle about the nature of the Church that needs to be stressed. The church is misunderstood if thought of as a series of branch offices. Rather, each congregation is to be a sacrament of the Church Universal, transparent (to the extent possible) to the wholeness we confess as characteristic of the body of Christ. That's where the vision comes alive in each place.

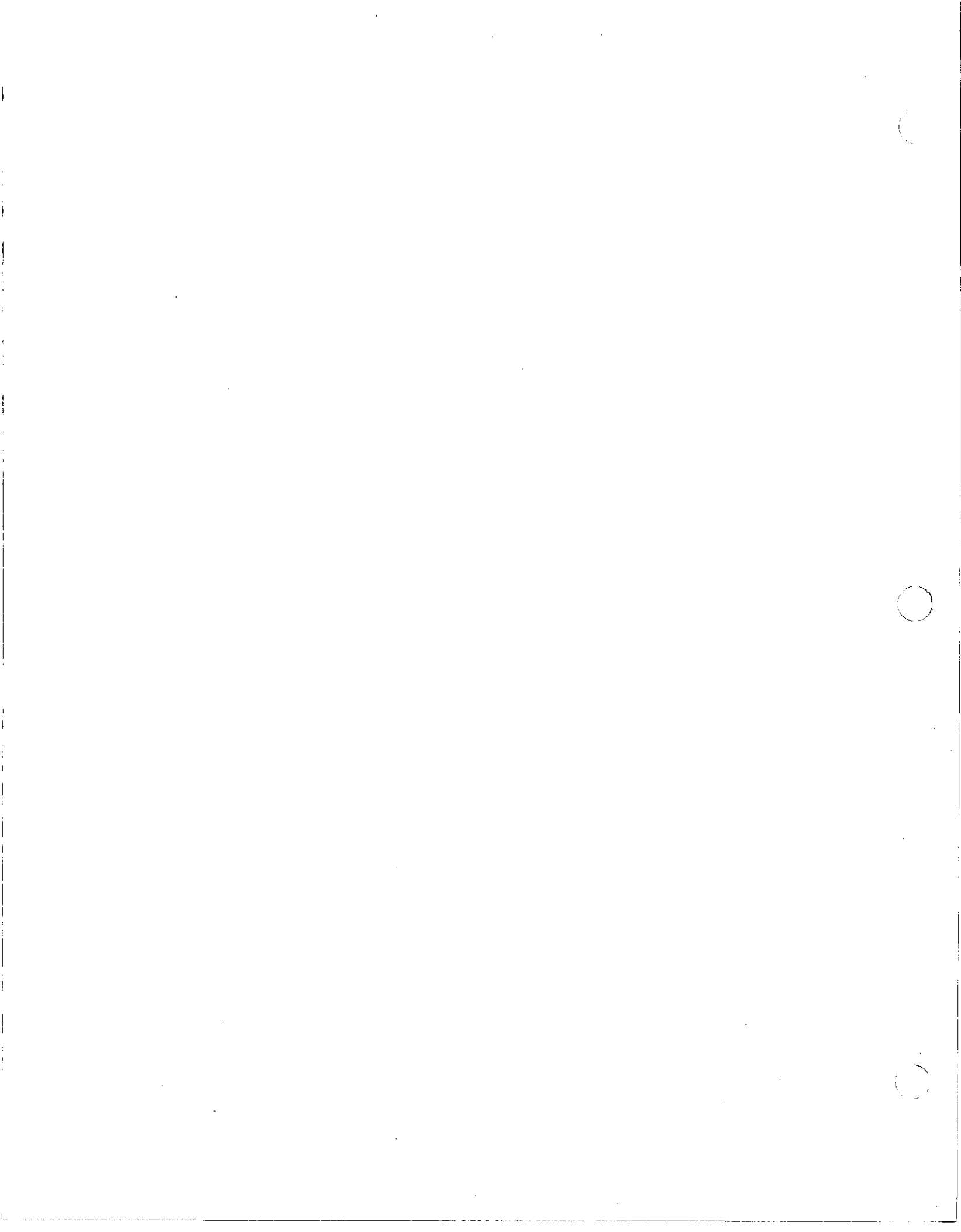
7. Genuine ecumenism cannot exist apart from a humility of spirit (apart from what Vatican II spoke of as "self-denial and unstinted love") and therefore stands in contrast to militant forms of Christian expansionism. The ecumenical Church bears bold witness to Christ, but precisely because it is bearing witness to Christ, it does so with sensitivity to cultures. It remains open to the presence of God in unexpected places; it listens as well as speaks.

8. Since the heart of the ecumenical movement is confession of the one creator God, who is known to us through Christ and the Holy Spirit, its purpose is not the establishment of some universal world religion. Ecumenism is always concerned with our relationship to people of other faiths because we are part of God's one creation; but the basis of that relationship is, for Christians, nothing other than the gospel – the good news that God loves *even* us!

If this is what it means to be ecumenical then, what are ESMs? That is the purpose of this resource, to begin a dialogue that looks at the nature, purpose, and gift given to us by this very unique ministry. I commend it to all who are committed to unity in the places where we live and worship.

Michael Kinnamon
January 1998





**Foundations of
Ecumenical
Shared Ministries**

ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY DEFINED

Ecumenical Shared Ministry refers to the many ways churches of different denominations cooperate in local ministry. The names of these ESMs vary from denomination to denomination. However, the language in this manual is as follows:

YOKED PARISHES are two or more local churches of different denominations in the same area that share a pastor. They may also share some programming. Larger ESM parishes may share other professional staff.

FEDERATED CHURCHES are single congregations related to two or more denominations. Persons may hold membership in one or the other of the denominations, or in the federated church itself.

UNION OR UNITED CHURCHES are similar to federated churches, but with only one membership roll.

Two other forms of ecumenical cooperation are *other denominational appointments* and *shared facilities*. "Other denominational appointments" occur, with the approval of the denominations involved, when a pastor of one denomination serves a congregation of another denomination. A "shared facilities" arrangement arises when a congregation of one denomination shares its space with a congregation of another denomination.

Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) churches have developed across the country. They are churches of different denominational backgrounds that make a stronger witness by working together, sharing leadership and resources. Some of these congregations are in rural areas where population and resources are declining. Some are in areas where congregations share common mission interests. All witness to the unity of Christ's Church.

ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) is a new term for a phenomenon in church life that just will not go away. In one form or another the ESM has been a part of the religious landscape for generations. ESM refers to congregations that are comprised of, or pastors who serve, more than one denomination. A study done by the CHARIS Ecumenical Center in 1993 discovered that an ESM had been formed in Pennsylvania as early as 1841.¹ Yet it was only one of scores of ESMs that were formed in Pennsylvania during the mid-nineteenth century by German immigrants of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. Most of these were called "union congregations," in which two different denominations utilized the same building for worship. Sometimes they shared a Sunday school and occasionally even a pastor, as well as other youth and adult activities, but they did not worship together. The nineteenth century also saw the formation of a few ESM churches in mission areas of the nation such as the Western Reserve; still others were formed in New England towns where the Unitarian and Congregational splits forced new alliances among congregations.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the formation of several new forms of ESM congregations. Hundreds of these congregations were formed in New England and other parts of the country during the time between the two world wars. These congregations were most frequently known as "federated churches" and were comprised of persons from two or more congregations of two or more denominations. Some were formed because of the changing fortunes of their host communities, but many were formed in response to an impulse toward Christian unity and the desire to provide a more effective ministry and witness in their communities. In 1963-5, the Boston University School of Theology conducted a longitudinal study of one hundred federated churches matched with a similar number of denominational churches in similar size and type communities.² The generalized learning was that from 1900 to 1960, the federated churches in New England had grown more, provided more comprehensive communi-

ty ministries and developed better financial resources than had denominational congregations of a similar membership and community size over the same period. At the same time, denominational leaders saw such federations as having few redeeming features, largely because they were difficult to relate to administratively and did not fit normal denominational processes, whether for pastoral selection, benevolence giving or yearly reporting.

With the development of the Rural Church Movement at about the time of World War I, federations, unions, mergers, ecumenical parishes, community churches and other shared ministries became a way to ensure the continuation of ministry in many towns and villages with dwindling populations. In the 1920's, the New York State Council of Churches Rural Church Institute at Cornell University proactively assisted hundreds of New York communities in developing such ESM congregations. Often they were developed as intentional theological and organizational expressions of Christian unity in many communities, especially in central and northeastern New York. Yet, by the 1970's, some New York denominational judicatories began to react to the plethora of such community rooted churches. At least two United Methodist Annual Conferences (UMC) in New York passed resolutions requiring that within ten years each federated congregation with a UMC component must have joined one of the founding denominations or a third denomination. If not, the UMC would no longer relate to the ESM congregation. The motivation seems to have been that such congregations were just too difficult to work with, as well as the belief that denominational congregations were more effective. Nearly 25 years later, most of the ESM congregations in New York are still ESM congregations and more have been formed every year, but they are still often seen by the denominations as too difficult to administer to merit their existence.

The 1960's and 1970's saw a significant increase in the number of new Ecumenical Shared Ministries across North America. Some, such as the United Protestant Church of Silver Bay, MN or the ecumenical congregations formed in Columbia, MD, Reston, VA and Newfields, OH, were formed for these "planned" communities, usually in response to

the impetus of the developer, who would not provide or sell land to single denominations. Others were formed in emerging suburban communities by denominational leaders who placed ministry and witness above denomination, especially where there were not enough residents in any one denomination to form a new congregation. Still others were formed in central cities and urban renewal neighborhoods.

It was also during this same period that the ecumenical fervor generated by the reforms and ecumenical impetus of Vatican II, as well as the excitement of the beginnings of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), led to several experiments in ministry and witness. Several "COCU churches" were formed in communities, uniting congregations from three or more participating denominations. A few are still being formed in the 1990's. ESMs are continuing to thrive today, even while denominations with declining numbers are raising their denominational flags and are re-emphasizing their unique denominational identity, beliefs and traditions, calling their constituencies to "get back to their roots."

ESMs continue to emerge because they make sense in a cooperative rather than a competitive world. As we approach the third millennium, and after a century and a half of ESM history, we know that ESMs often play a vital role as an expression of "church" in communities across North America. Their median size is larger than congregations in most denominations. They are often very effective and successful partners in their communities. And most are effective in continuing the tradition of their sponsoring denominations. So, it seems quite likely that ESMs will continue. It is important that those of us who care about the Church of Jesus Christ learn how to utilize this unique form of "church" for the glory of God and for the nurture and well being of those who name the name of the Christ. ESMs are a form of ministry that brings hope and influence to our understanding of what it means to be in Christian fellowship.

THE VISION: "THAT ALL MAY BE ONE"

We live in a world divided by nation, race, gender, economic class, language, sexual orientation, and religion. It is astounding that even the followers of Jesus, who prayed that all who believed in him would be one, are also so clearly divided. Ecumenical Shared Ministries, because they unite congregations from different denominations, bear witness to the godly gift, or charism, of inclusiveness. An ecumenical consultation at Maryvale Retreat Center in North Dakota (1992) declared:

Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) is God's Spirit working to further the biblical vision articulated in the Old and New Testaments that the church be one, breaking down the wall of separation so that the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and lived. ESM will be one of the very positive and effective ways of "being the church" in the 21st century, through bringing together Christians of two or more denominations.³

This vision of Ecumenical Shared Ministry congregations reflects Paul's admonition that in Christ "There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, NRSV). Sometimes ecumenical ministries are accused of developing out of a survivor mentality, but the real mark of Ecumenical Shared Ministry is mission. Jesus prayed that all might be one so that the world may believe. ESM has overcome the separation of denominations to form a new reality based on the Spirit of Christ. One sign of the Spirit at work in the church is the impetus for ministry and mission that comes from ESM's vision of inclusiveness and outreach.

The needs in modern society are obvious. Gang warfare, negative political campaigns, exclusive interest groups, all of which claim "the truth," are signs of divided communities. Ecumenical Shared Ministries are signs of hope, because inclusiveness flows from the nature and identity of ESM congregations, overcoming divisiveness and leading to specific acts of reconciliation.

STRENGTHS OF ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY⁴

In 1994, research with Ecumenical Shared Ministry pastors conducted by the CHARIS Ecumenical Center, Moorhead, Minnesota, pointed to the following strengths:

• Enhanced Ministry

Ministry in a community is stronger when its local congregations work together. Worship, education and programming are enriched when leadership is drawn from more than one denomination. Pastors and congregations also learn to appreciate diversity and deal with differences.

• Enhanced Worship

Congregations learn a variety of liturgical practices, drawn from the different denominations. In the process, they become more flexible and more understanding of their neighbors.

• Wise Stewardship of Resources

Local congregations that work together may use financial and human resources more effectively. ESM churches are able to make better use of buildings, money, and staff. They may also be wiser stewards of the energy and the gifts of the laity.

• Contributions to the Local Community

Linking congregations across denominational lines may better preserve and enhance the cohesiveness of the local community than linking congregations across the community. For example, children in the same school are then more likely to attend the same church.

• Authenticity of the Witness

There is a real power and deep satisfaction when Christians come together and discover their unity in Christ. Ecumenical Shared Ministry congregations find their essential identity in Jesus Christ rather than in particular denominations.

• Satisfaction in Ministry

The CHARIS study found the level of satisfaction of the Ecumenical Shared Ministry pas-

tors to be remarkably high. Because ESMs tend to be open to new possibilities, they can often attract imaginative and creative leaders, both clergy and laity. Using resources from more than one denomination offers pastors and other professional staff opportunities for growth.

•Expanded Mission

For struggling congregations, Ecumenical Shared Ministry is much more than a means of survival. The diversity of ESM congregations allows them to be more inclusive and to participate in unique forms of mission, such as interracial programs, ecumenical youth ministries, international partnerships, and global peace initiatives.

CHALLENGES OF ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

Just as there are strengths of ESM ministry, there are challenges. Some are the result of dealing with two or more institutions. Others arise out of differences in polity. Some stress points occur in the congregation, others in the judicatory offices. The CHARIS study identifies some of these concerns.⁵

Meetings and Mail

There are twice or three times as many meetings to attend, or at least to be aware of, in two or more denominations. There are also reports to be prepared and mail to be answered for all. Yoked parishes and federated churches have more than one membership roll to keep, as well as more than one set of financial records.

Denominational Identity

The erosion of denominational identity can sometimes frustrate and upset some members and judicatory staff. On the other hand, members often become more aware of their own faith traditions when they come face to face with other traditions.

Financial Issues

Each denomination has its own system of financial support and each has its own lan-

guage: apportionments, pledges, per capita, etc. The different systems can be confusing. Denominations have special campaigns and offerings at different times of the year and for different purposes. These campaigns often are troublesome for shared ministry congregations. Other financial issues involve the pastor's salary, pension, medical coverage, and moving expenses. Church property, particularly the parsonage, is handled differently in different denominations. Buildings sometimes present special challenges, in that denominations greatly differ on how a title is held. Frequently legal counsel is required in order to assess rights and responsibilities of the parties involved. In addition, members sometimes attach their congregational identity to the physical facility; separation from what is known as "my church" could be difficult.

Reports

Each denomination has its own report forms that need to be completed on a regular basis. There is, however, no uniformity in the forms or kinds of data requested by the denominations. The result is that a seemingly small administrative task may take a longer time.

Worship and Related Matters

Worship and sacraments may cause some problems in ESMs because of the varied liturgies and rituals used by different denominations.

Pastoral Selection

One of the most difficult issues in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry is dealing with the different ways that congregations secure their pastors. Many denominations [American Baptist Churches, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ] use the call system of pastoral placement. Though those denominations may differ in their precise processes, congregations that use the "call" system have a similar methodology for selecting a pastor. The United Methodist Church, on the other hand, use an appointment system in which pastors are appointed to local churches for a specific period of time. The difference between the call and appointment systems often extend the amount

of time it takes to place a pastor. This can be frustrating to the congregation, causing them to ask questions like: Why does it take so long to "call" a pastor? What is an interim minister? Why don't we have more say in who our pastor will be? An obvious solution to the problem is to alternate or rotate pastors among the denominations. However, the solution sometimes makes the problem worse; a called pastor, for example, may serve for many years, while an appointed pastor may serve two, four, or eight years, depending on the needs of the local United Methodist Annual Conference.

Oversight

Who supervises the work of the pastors? What are the lines of accountability? Often there is no clear agreement about oversight of an Ecumenical Shared Ministry. A major problem arises when there are issues of discipline, pastoral misconduct, or church order. Pastoral oversight requires more time and attention from judicatory staff persons. Lines of communication must be maintained across denominational lines, and judicatory staff need to become acquainted with the polity of other denominations. Another important issue is the installation of pastors, a practice that is rare in The United Methodist Church but is regularly practiced in other denominations.

Formation of Ecumenical Shared Ministries

A PROCESS FOR FORMATION

Beginning The Process

Ideally an Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) evolves out of a vision for ministry. While survival may be one of the reasons for a church to consider ESM as an option, the process of exploring and examining possibilities should be intentionally directed by a sense of mission and hoped for ministry. The more congregations emphasize their vision for ministry and mission, the greater the chances for a constructive and growing ESM.

Ecumenical Shared Ministries often emerge from a sense of need: declining membership, decaying or inadequate buildings, inadequate financial resources for the pastoral leadership or specific racial or ethnic concerns and considerations.

An important first step is identifying the factors which warrant consideration of an Ecumenical Shared Ministry. Each congregation should identify its own agenda and goals for mission before beginning the process.

Some ESMs develop intentionally through the recognition that by pooling resources, human and material, the whole community can better be served. Each congregation brings its strengths to the mission to serve the ministry of the whole.

Some new church starts are deliberately designed to be ESM, as two or more denominations work together to establish a congregation to serve the community and better practice Christian stewardship.

Rediscovering the Congregation's Identity

Identity refers to ethnic and cultural background, geographic markers, age, generation typologies, and congregational and personal histories. A church may be a combination of identities, e.g., a downtown church, of eastern European origins, composed primarily of older adults, defined by the impact of World War II or the contributions of an influential family in the church.

Ecumenical Shared Ministry is like a marriage in which not only two people, but two families and family cultures are brought together. Cultures and identities become clear as those involved are able to identify the differences

between one congregation and another. A congregation that is able to define and rediscover its own identity will be more able to find common ground and places of compromise with another congregation. Even clear differences between the congregations or denominations, if they are recognized and named, can become points of strength and appreciation. Mistrust and misunderstanding often develop when important aspects of identity go unrecognized.

Vision

Congregations interested in pursuing the ESM process must begin to develop a vision for the future. What are our hopes and dreams? What are our clearly defined goals? How will we measure our progress? A mission statement which captures goals, hopes and dreams becomes a working document for potential partners in ministry to expand upon or claim ownership of the developing vision. Most denominational offices have resources for this process. In some instances, two or more congregations are already in conversation as the ESM formation process begins. Such congregations would still need to go individually through the "identity" and "vision" steps in this process.

Invitation

Once a vision for ministry has been developed, a congregation is ready to consider ESM partners. The mission statement helps provide direction for the search. While possible partners with widely differing theologies, goals, and future visions may be suitable as yoked partners, congregations seeking federated or union status may need to be more closely matched around these issues.

It is possible that no partners in ministry exist, in which case it may be necessary to explore the possibilities for an ESM involving denominations not presently represented in the community.

Mutual Exploration

Once a potential partner has been identified, extreme sensitivity is required in making the initial contact. Churches often feel threatened when cooperation through a more formal relationship is suggested. Often the first conversations begin at the judicatory level, or perhaps the congrega-

tions have been cooperating informally for a period of time. However the process begins, there needs to be both formal and informal contact in order to build that kind of trust which allows a partnership to develop.

Once identified, the second church needs time to reflect on its own ministry, identify needs and develop its own vision and mission statement for ministry. If the second church is open to further conversation around the possibility of ESM, the next step involves extensive conversation around vision. The churches should focus on commonality and differences in their visions. At this point, the churches simply identify differences, rather than trying to solve them.

If the churches can accept each other's visions, they can move forward in the process toward forming an ESM. Denominational representatives should be kept informed of the discussion at each step in the process; their approval is necessary before moving ahead. It is also important that all the members of each congregation be kept fully informed as the process continues. The participating churches must agree on procedures and a flexible timetable.

Each congregation should develop a list of the components of its ministry and then rank them in order of their importance. They may ask questions such as: What is most important to each of us? Our building? Our mission? Evangelism? Theological perspective? Worship style? History of the church or denomination? Our style of governance? Ethnic or cultural background? Christian education? Music?

When the lists are shared, both differences and agreements will appear. Persons should be encouraged to raise all genuine concerns, even those that appear "petty" or "unchristian." Each item identified represents a real concern and needs to be addressed.

The areas of agreement need to be noted and the gifts each congregation brings to the table need to be celebrated. One church may have more members, or a better building, while another may have a more active youth group, newer hymnals, or Vacation Bible School. The naming of these contributions honors all partners by "leveling the playing field" with the recognition that working together opens the possibility for more effective ministry.

A joint committee from the churches should

meet to deal with the differences. For example, if one congregation receives holy communion seated in the pews and the other receives kneeling at the altar rail, what are possible ways of working out the differences? Is compromise a good thing? Is compromise possible? Creativity and good humor are important for this stage of the discussion.

The committee should report to each congregation and present possible solutions to differences. Each congregation should then vote on whether or not to continue conversation. Should we discontinue the process, or should we proceed, in principle, toward an ESM?

Mutual Mission Statement

At this stage a joint committee of the churches will develop a mission statement for the Ecumenical Shared Ministry based on previous discussions about the dreams, concerns, and differences of the congregations. The committee may also develop a document outlining the congregations' agreement on particular issues, if certain agreements have been reached.

Preliminary Decision

When the mission statement is complete, each congregation should be asked to ratify the document in principle, to send it back for further study, or not to continue the process. At this stage the document is not legally binding; it is a statement of agreement and intention to move toward and Ecumenical Shared Ministry.

Legal Documentation, Constitution, and Bylaws

If the preliminary document is accepted, the legal document must be drafted in binding legal language. It will be necessary to formulate a constitution and bylaws. An attorney is important for this part of the process. In most denominations, it will be necessary to secure written approval from denominational administrators.⁶

Modification

After the legal documents are drafted, the congregations must now take legal action to ratify the agreement, constitution, and bylaws. If the documents are approved, then the Ecumenical Shared Ministry becomes official.

CALL vs. APPOINTMENT

People in an ESM parish have the same expectations that people have in denominational parishes. They want pastors who demonstrate, in their daily lives, the love of God. They want pastors who move toward fulfilling a vision of ministry that is specific for the time and place in which they live. Those responsible for finding, placing, or being ESM pastors, know that these must be persons of special gifts and with a calling to ministry beyond one denomination. They also know that arranging an appointment or implementing a call requires special care because of the unique nature of the ministry.

In many ESM-related denominations the congregation, in consultation with the regional leader, calls pastors. In The United Methodist Church, however, pastors are appointed by their bishop. This difference is fundamental and can present some real obstacles. The good news is that both call and appointment systems strive for good relationships among the pastor, the congregation, and the judicatory staff. Therefore, it is important for everyone involved to work together to resolve challenges that arise. Consider the following example from a federated or yoked parish: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor of an ESM has read a letter of resignation to her congregations. This parish includes two churches in neighboring towns; one is of her own denomination and the other is United Methodist. The members of the ESM have agreed to alternate so that as leadership changes, the pastor's denomination will also change. They have also agreed that, in selecting a pastor, they will follow the procedures of the new pastor's denomination. Because the members of the ESM have agreed to alternate the denominations of their pastors, their next pastor will be United Methodist.

Before she submitted her letter of resignation, the pastor talked to the judicatory staff of both denominations. The United Methodist district superintendent then talked with the chair of the congregation's Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) to set up a meeting. The PPRC, which includes people from both congregations

and denominations, will be asked to put together a profile of both congregations. Their report will include:

- the strengths and needs of the parish;
- the ESM's mission statement;
- their vision for the future;
- their hopes for a new pastor;
- the church's location and the distance to a larger community;
- information about pastoral compensation, benefits, and professional expenses.

The process of putting together a profile of the church helps the parish become clear about the congregation's mission, ministry, and hopes for the future so that a new pastor will be prepared to lead the congregation in the direction it wants to go. The ESM will have to meet the compensation requirements of the United Methodist conference, just as it did with the requirements of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The district superintendent will take the committee's report and other information about the parish to the cabinet (the bishop and the district superintendents) to begin the process of selecting a pastor to appoint to the parish. When the members of the cabinet find the person with the gifts and graces that best match the needs of the parish, they will contact him or her and talk about becoming the pastor. If the one selected shows a willingness to accept the appointment, a meeting will be scheduled with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. People from both congregations need to agree to the appointment for it to be successful. When everyone agrees to the appointment, an announcement date is set, subject to the final reading of appointments by the bishop at annual conference. In a union church, the PPRC could represent the congregation in the same way as a search committee would represent the parish in calling a pastor from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Sometimes circumstances call for an interim pastor. The process for securing an interim minister is different from the ordinary appointment or call process in two ways:

- In the call process, some denominations utilize members of the judicatory staff to identify

and recommend one or more persons to serve as the interim pastor. The local congregations do not have access to all interested interim pastors, but only to those named by judicatory staff. In other call processes, congregations seek an interim from an open selection system and are not restricted to only those names provided by judicatory staff.

- The selection of an interim pastor in a call system is usually made by a representative group from the local congregation with ratification by the congregation. In an appointment system, an interim pastor is not usually required. When there is a temporary vacancy, the district superintendent names someone in conjunction with the cabinet (the bishop and the district superintendents of the conference) on a short-term basis.

Because of denominational norms or procedures, an interim pastor normally does not become pastor of the ESM. Before moving into an interim pastor relationship, the pastor, the congregation(s), and the denominations should understand that to be named as an interim infers that the position will be temporary.

A COMPARISON OF THE STEPS INVOLVED IN SELECTING A PASTOR

The next pastor will be "appointed"

1. The pastor or superintendent decides to request that a pastoral change be made (usually in January or February).
2. Judicatory staffs of other denominations are contacted. An announcement may or may not be made at this time.
3. The PPRC (which includes members from both denominations) meets with judicatory representatives to prepare a profile of the parish.
4. The United Methodist cabinet (district superintendent and bishop of the conference) reviews the profile and recommends a new pastor.
5. The new pastor is contacted and agrees to the appointment.
6. The district superintendent introduces the

new pastor to the PPRC.

7. Announcement of the intention of the appointment is made to the parish.
8. The appointment is read at annual conference by the bishop (usually in June).
9. The new pastor begins working with the ESM (usually in the month of July).

The next pastor will be "called"

1. The pastor or congregation announces her or his resignation.
2. Judicatory staffs of both denominations are contacted.
3. The judicatory staff meets with the search committee (which includes members from both denominations) to outline steps for the pastoral search.
4. If needed, a selection process for an interim pastor is begun, and a candidate is selected and agreed to by the interim search team.
5. The committee develops a profile or documents needed to extend a call.
6. The church profile is sent to the denomination to be circulated.
7. The committee receives and reviews information about prospective pastors.
8. The selected prospective pastors are invited to be interviewed by the search committee. Selected candidates are invited to preach in a neutral pulpit.
9. The final candidate preaches for the congregation and then is presented to the congregation for a vote.
10. The new pastor begins working with the parish and an installation service is planned.

**Pastoral Leadership
for Ecumenical
Shared Ministries**

THE ROLES OF PASTORS IN AN ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY

At first glance, pastoral roles in an ESM appear to be the same as in a traditional denominational congregation. However, a deeper look at the roles an ESM pastor plays reveals unique challenges and opportunities.

Historian and Teacher

As historian and teacher, the pastor will:

- learn and pass on the stories of each congregation's past in a way that keeps their heritage meaningful;
- respect the decisions of earlier times, while being sensitive to how past decisions affect the present;
- keep the shared heritage alive.

Colleague

As colleague, the pastor will:

- become friends with other pastors in the denominations represented by the ESM;
- stay connected to the leaders and structures of each denomination represented;
- understand the pastor's accountability within different denominations;
- choose priorities among denominational events;
- determine what training programs are available or required for a pastor serving a congregation in each denomination.

Interpreter of Polity

As interpreter, the pastor will:

- have working knowledge of the ESM bylaws and constitution;
- honor the procedures and time-lines within the bylaws;
- help the congregations follow the accepted procedures in their life together;
- become familiar with the ESM's organizing documents, mission and vision statements to assist members in developing strategies that live out their intentions.

Liason and Partner

As liason and partner, the pastor will:

- complete all reports and forms required by one denomination and distribute to the others;
- inform the respective denominational staff regarding congregational celebrations and special events;
- be willing to serve on committees and boards in each of the represented denominations.

Ecumenical Learner

As ecumenical learner, the pastor will:

- learn the history, theology, practice, polity, and traditions of each represented denomination;
- understand the ethos of each denomination;
- teach new members the basic tenets of each denomination.

Scribe

As scribe, the pastor will:

- make sure tasks are delegated carefully, taking care to keep records in all areas of the ESM;
- leave succinct records for future pastors and generations.

Mediator and Counselor

As mediator and counselor, the pastor will:

- encourage ongoing conversation about the congregation's life together;
- anticipate tension about the process of decision making;
- know local traditions and be sensitive to them; sense proper timing for change or adjustment of traditions;
- help persons understand the different traditions and practices of the represented denominations;
- interpret to church members any troublesome aspects of polity and positions of the other ESM denominations.

Worship Leader

As worship leader, the pastor will:

- be sensitive to varying sacramental practices, especially their frequency, method, and meaning;
- be willing to discuss the other denomination's theology of the sacraments and the pastor's personal understanding of them;
- be aware of any local traditions that may be unique or especially important to the congregation.

Leader

As leader, the pastor will:

- celebrate the union of the denominations within the congregation;
- lift up the positive aspects of participation in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry; express the joy in the partnership of congregations;
- encourage everyone in shared ministry;
- initiate ecumenical connections in the community;
- develop mission that flows from the inclusive nature of the ESM.

Prophet

As prophet, the pastor will:

- affirm diversity in all forms – racial, gender, age, etc. – as a gift from God to be affirmed in the church and the community;
- join with groups and individuals in the community to organize ministries of justice and reconciliation;
- initiate ecumenical and interfaith efforts to insure religious freedom and compassion for all God's people;
- participate in community organization efforts with poor and oppressed people, using the ESM experience with denominational diversity as a model for overcoming differences in the community.

Evangelist

As evangelist, the pastor will:

- identify the Ecumenical Shared Ministry as a response to God's call to unity;
- know that people are attracted to the ecumenical character of the congregation;
- be an evangelist for ecumenism;
- call forth persons to witness to God's love;
- train members to reach out to people without a connection, inviting them to a dynamic relationship in Jesus Christ;
- acknowledge the difference between compromise and caving in so that the goals of the ministry are not lost.

Example of Hospitality

As example of hospitality, the pastor will:

- Help people in all congregations feel secure and comfortable with the pastor, regardless of their denominational background,
- Accept persons of other traditions;

- Celebrate the gifts of all persons and congregations, rejoicing in their diversity;
- Look beyond one's own denomination;
- Identify the culture of the community served and how the congregations fit into that culture;
- Assess the community's needs and how the congregations might address them;
- Develop leadership in the congregation and in the community;
- Seek and serve justice.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY PASTORS AND POINTS OF INTEREST FOR ESM CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR JUDICATORY⁷

It takes a special kind of person to work in the field of Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM). Such a person will need an extra dose of openness, flexibility, and creativity because all congregations have their own patterns of working and thinking in relation to their communities. In addition, differences become even more pronounced when a congregation, or several congregations, represent different denominational histories and polities.

Learning to serve an ESM congregation usually develops from on-the-job training. Seldom has a denomination adequately prepared a congregation or its clergy for this special role.

In this section, some of the critical characteristics needed for ESM pastors and their congregations are described. Many pastors will find they already have the skills needed for working with an ESM. Many congregations may find that the call to be an ESM greatly matches their own vision of what it means to be a Church.

Characteristics of ESM Pastors

Commitment to the Unity of the Body of Christ

- A commitment to the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, together with the acceptance of its diversity;

- A commitment to the process of change, whether it is "comfortable" or not;
- A commitment to work together in harmony while allowing for differences;
- A commitment to a shared vision of mission and ministry.

Strength of Faith

- A clear understanding of the faith of the Christian Church and of one's own denomination;
- A firm conviction regarding one's call to ecumenical work in the Church;
- A belief in God's mission, action, and efforts toward unity and reconciliation;
- A willingness to help people focus on the essential principles and experiences of the Christian faith, as well as to be faithful to the traditions of the different denominations.

Flexibility and Resilience

- Ability to adapt one's ministry and methods to the unique needs of this form of multi-denominational ministry;
- Openness to, an appreciation for, and an acceptance of differing traditions, practices, polities and beliefs;
- Ability to delegate tasks, such as some reports (none are standard) while retaining accountability;
- Ability to determine, among the many denominational meetings which are required, which might be useful for fellowship, which are of personal interest, and which are optional;
- Ability to maintain care for oneself and when demands on time are high;
- Knowledge of the difference between compromising and caving in, so that the goals of the ministry are not lost;
- Ability to be creative in seeing possibilities for mission and ministry.

Principal Understandings

- The initiation of a federated or union congregation may result in some erosion of denominational identity and each denomination's identity needs to be embraced.
- In a yoked ESM involving two or more communities, the pastor needs to be sensitive to the ministry of those congregations in communities other than the community where the pastor

resides.

- The liturgical practices, historical traditions, and theological perspectives of represented denominations are rich resources which can enhance worship.
- Members' exposure to other traditions and liturgical styles can sharpen their understanding of their own.
- The history, doctrine, and polity of the different congregations and denominations should be taught and understood.
- There are different requirements in each denomination regarding property ownership, denominational support, pastoral compensation levels, pastoral accountability, supervision and discipline, reporting, and participation in denominational work beyond the local church.
- Judicatory staff and other denominational colleagues are the best source for understanding denomination requirements.

Pastors of ESMs report appreciation for the challenges of ESM, excitement at new opportunities, and a high level of satisfaction in their ministries.

QUESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL ESM PASTORS' PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Potential ESM pastors may find it helpful to review their own journey in ministry and their awareness of other denominations. The following questions may provide guidelines for prayerful discernment.

Reflect briefly on your life in the church.

- What denominations have been part of your church life and how have they affected your faith journey?
- What characteristics of each denomination do you most appreciate and affirm?
- What characteristics of each denomination do you find least attractive?

Reflect on your educational experiences.

- What educational experiences may have prepared you for work in an ESM?
- If you are seminary trained, what opportuni-

ties did you have in seminary to learn about and be exposed to the faith, traditions, and practices of denominations different from your own?

Reflect on your pastoral experience prior to serving in an ESM.

- What experiences have you had working with individuals, groups, or congregations from other denominations?
- In your ecumenical experience, what did you learn about your own sense of denominational identity?
- What in your pastoral experience prepared you for working in an ESM?

Reflect on the other denomination(s) involved in the ESM you are considering.

- Have you met with denominational officials or attended an orientation for new clergy in the denomination(s) other than your own?
- Have you met with other clergy for mutual support, continuing education, and spiritual growth?
- Have you attended meetings of other denominations represented in the ESM and participated in their work as your gifts and time allow?
- Have you participated in local ecumenical events?
- Have you taken a course in the history and polity of the other denomination(s) and read the basic texts describing the theology of the other denomination(s)?
- Are you familiar with and do you subscribe to and read the other denominational publications?

Reflect on entering an ESM setting.

- How do members of the ESM describe themselves and their church?
- How do members of the ESM understand their role in the denominations to which they are related?
- Is the ESM organized so that it reflects one denominational identity more than others?
- Do the judicatory officials (e.g., district superintendent, association minister, etc.) understand and support the Ecumenical Shared Ministry?
- How do you evaluate your training, experiences, and gifts for ESM?

THE PASTOR AS INTERPRETER OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

One of the more difficult tasks thrust upon ESM pastors is that of interpreting controversial denominational issues. Local church members look to pastors to help them make sense of issues such as abortion, homosexuality, casino gambling, school vouchers, alcohol, drugs, and other issues that are under discussion in their denomination. ESM pastors are expected to interpret the stances of their participating denominations to their congregations. They may also be expected to communicate to denominational leadership the viewpoints of the members of their congregations. There are at least three areas of potential conflict:

- Pastors may be unfamiliar with the stances of the denomination(s) other than their own.
- The processes by which denominations discuss issues or adopt positions may be difficult to understand or may even seem unfair.
- The official positions of each denomination may disagree and lead to confusion in the local congregation(s).

Pastors in ESMs can learn to interpret denominational positions more effectively. Below are the suggestions for more effective interpretation. ESM pastors should be able to:

- Read the denominational publications of each denomination involved in the ESM. Be aware of issues that seem to be important;
- Talk with other pastors and judicatory leaders of each denomination about issues that are potentially divisive;
- Understand the process by which each denomination arrives at its positions on issues and what an official position means in each denomination. For example, does a particular stance at a denominational conference have binding authority on a local congregation or is it simply the opinion of the conference?
- Be aware of religious news in the mass media. Many members are informed (or misinformed) about denominational issues because of media coverage;
- Recognize that many parishioners may not be concerned with issues that are tearing their

denominations apart;

- Obtain official denominational study guides, which are often published when an issue is being debated. Convene a forum or discussion groups to study the issue;
- Invite speakers who are familiar with the issues to address forums or classes.
- Represent fairly the positions of all the denominations involved in your ecumenical shared ministry;
- Understand the meaning of responsible dissent in each denomination.
- Be honest about your own opinions.

CARE AND NURTURE OF ESM PASTORS

For ESM congregations, the polity of the denominations involved determines the nature, source, and amount of support available to care and nurture the pastor. Each denomination provides a certain amount of continuing education and nurture that are accessible to their pastors. Each also has expectations for pastoral accountability. Comparable systems exist in each denomination and should be fully explored for the resources they offer.

Whatever the structures used, pastoral nurture is an important aspect in the life of all congregations. The committee or group charged with this responsibility is generally expected to advise the pastor, to support the pastor's leadership, and to interpret the congregation's concerns, hopes, cares and expectations. Open communication, trust, and confidentiality should characterize the work of this group.

One issue that an ESM needs to consider is the procedure for discipline within the congregation. In the formation period for an ESM, discuss with denominational representatives how these issues will be processed if the need should arise. Which denomination will assist the congregation in dealing with such situations as the embezzlement of funds, congregational conflict, or sexual harassment? What will be the process for consultation among the involved denominations?

In the event of pastoral misconduct, judica-

tory staff of all participating denominations need to be informed.

Publications from several denominations list the following as appropriate functions of Pastoral Parish Relations Committees:

- Orienting new pastor: includes helping each new pastor get started by hosting or facilitating times of fellowship, directly teaching the pastor about congregational life and its administration, and supporting the pastor and her or his family settle in the community.
- Understanding pastoral and congregational roles: includes clarifying and communicating both the congregations' expectations of the pastor and the pastor's expectations for the congregations.
- Providing a communication link: includes regularly considering the pastor's leadership, the congregations' response to it, and the pastor's response to the congregations.
- Advocating for the pastor fair and just compensation: includes negotiating adequate compensation and benefits, time and money for continuing education, vacation, and termination procedures.
- Facilitating pastor's review and evaluation process: includes facilitating a review of the pastor's work, establishing guidelines for the annual or biannual evaluation of the congregation's and pastor's mutual ministry.
- Helping the church and pastor deal with conflict: includes working toward reconciliation when conflict does occur and calling on denominational staff for guidance when necessary.
- Assisting the pastor in setting priorities: includes helping the pastor to discern how to balance the competing needs and desires of the congregation and the multiple denominations in which the church is in relation.

ESMs may offer challenges to committees responsible for pastoral nurture. In many congregations, job descriptions and explicit job expectations have not been considered necessary. This is not to say that churches' expectations were absent; they were simply unstated. In addition, when congregations unite, their expectations around congregational culture and denominational identity may not easily coexist. For example, if one congregation expects the pastor's leadership style to be authoritarian and another expects the pastor to involve the con-

gregation in leadership, the pastor may be caught in the middle of competing expectations. Lack of clarity and agreement among ESM congregations can frustrate everyone and seriously undermine the pastor's ability to do his or her job well.

In general, ESMs will need to be patient and

deliberate in setting up pastoral relations committees, in defining and communicating pastoral and congregational expectations, and in considering new ways for the congregations to relate to the pastor. If new expectations can be negotiated, ESMs will be in the position of modeling for the larger body of Christ a healthy and productive church family.

**Congregational
Life for
Ecumenical
Shared Ministries**

THE SACRAMENTS

Introduction

Congregations in Ecumenical Shared Ministries will have a variety of traditions related to the celebration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Their traditions may reflect the practices of one of the participating congregations or denominations, a blending of two or more traditions, or a compromise among the congregations represented in the ESM. Because the sacraments are so important in the life of the church, discussion of their meaning and practice often generates strong feelings among members. This is particularly true in Ecumenical Shared Ministries, because current practice often reflects a delicate balance of opinions, commitments, and beliefs. The temptation for the pastor is to leave things as they are and for longtime members to say, "We've always done it that way." can be a source of anxiety for other members. When ESM congregations, however, regularly engage in biblical and theological reflection, because new members bring ecumenical understanding and fresh perspectives, worship life is enriched.

Ecumenical Understandings

In 1982, representatives of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches from around the world approved a statement called Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry⁸ (BEM). This document describes what the various Christian traditions believe and identifies similarities and differences in perspective. Ecumenical Shared Ministries may find it a helpful resource as they begin to think about their worship and sacramental life.

Infant and Believer's Baptism

Baptism is described in BEM as "rooted in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, in his death and in his resurrection. Baptism today continues the Universal practice of baptism in the apostolic Church from its earliest days [as] attested in the letters of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, and the writings of the Fathers".⁹ The paper identifies five common understandings of the meaning of baptism.

Baptism:

- is a "participation in Christ's death and resur-

rection"

- involves "conversion, pardoning, and cleansing"
- bestows the "anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit", nurturing the life of faith; incorporates the individual into the church as a member of Christ's Body
- is a sign in this world of the reign of God and of the life of the world to come.¹⁰

Those common understandings are expressed in different baptismal practices. Christians need to understand and respect the historical and doctrinal differences related to infant baptism and believer's baptism. BEM states, however, that the differences "become less sharp when it is recognized that both forms of baptism embody God's own initiative in Christ and express a response of faith made within the believing community"¹¹ and notes that:

The practice of infant baptism emphasizes the corporate faith and the faith that the child shares with its parents. The infant is born into a broken world and shares in its brokenness. Through baptism, the promise and claim of the Gospel are laid upon the child. The personal faith of the recipient of baptism and faithful participation in the life of the Church is essential for the full fruit of baptism.

The practice of believer's baptism emphasizes the explicit confession of the person who responds to the grace of God in and through the community of faith and who seeks baptism.¹²

Of particular interest for many ESMs is the statement about Baptism and Christian nurture: *Both forms of baptism require a similar and responsible attitude towards Christian nurture. A rediscovery of the continuing character of Christian nurture may facilitate the mutual acceptance of different initiation practices.¹³*

The Lord's Supper

The many terms used for the Lord's Supper (Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Mass, and the Lord's Supper) make evident historical differences in understanding. BEM reminds us that the Lord's Supper is a gift from the Lord instituted at the meal on the night when he was betrayed (as in the Gospels and 1 Corinthians). It

is also related to other meals during Jesus' ministry which "enact the nearness of the Kingdom,"¹⁴ and to meals after the resurrection when Christ was present with the disciples. Christians also see connections between the Lord's Supper and the Passover meal, which commemorates Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Christians in the ecumenical community have affirmed that the celebration of the Lord's Supper includes:

- thanksgiving to God "for everything accomplished in creation, redemption, and sanctification;"¹⁵
- a "memorial of the crucified and risen Christ"¹⁶ who is himself present in the meal; an invocation of the Spirit, "the immeasurable strength of love which makes [the Eucharist or Lord's Supper] possible and continues to make it effective;"¹⁷
- a communion of the faithful demonstrating and effecting "the oneness of the sharers with Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places;"¹⁸
- a vision, sign, and foretaste "of the divine rule [of God] promised as the final renewal of Creation."¹⁹

In each of our denominations, worship practices place emphasis on one or more of these understandings of the Lord's Supper. However, sharp disagreements over the exact meaning of some of these themes that define the sacrament continue to divide Christians at the Table. ESM congregations have a unique opportunity to reflect on the significance of Communion, discover deeper levels of meaning, and help all Christians to renew and revitalize their practice of the Lord's Supper.

Deciding on Worship Practices in Ecumenical Shared Ministries

Even common understandings of the meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Supper leave congregations with a vast array of decisions about practice. Questions about Baptism still need to be answered: Should we baptize infants or only believers? Should baptism be by immersion or by sprinkling? Should baptism include godparents? Sponsors? Where in the sanctuary should the baptistry or baptismal font be located?

Should baptism be administered on any Sunday or reserved for special occasions in the liturgical year? Must we use the traditional formula ("Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"), or may other words be used?

Churches also still have to resolve questions about the practice of the Lord's Supper: How frequently should communion be celebrated? Are children welcome at the table? Should we receive Communion seated in the pew, kneeling at the altar rail, or standing at the table? Should there be a common cup or individual cups? Do we use a loaf of bread, cubes of bread, or wafers? May we use wine, or must we always use grape juice? May we offer both? Who presides at the table? What is the appropriate role for lay leaders? What do we do with the elements after the service? Which of the many liturgies available should we use? How much of each liturgy is absolutely necessary?

The choices seem endless and there is usually no single answer that is right or wrong for every denomination or congregation. Issues around the sacraments may be especially difficult for Ecumenical Shared Ministries, which bring together two or more distinct traditions. Practice should express beliefs, and changing traditional practices can call forth strong emotional responses and resistance. How can an Ecumenical Shared Ministry make decisions about how to practice baptism and the Lord's Supper?

A good first step is to identify current practices to determine the reasons behind them. Why do churches do what they do? Understanding reasons can lead to greater sensitivity toward important values that should be respected. Understanding may help members of an ESM to see when and why change is difficult and also to discern a readiness for change.

A second step is to study the traditions of the denominations in the ESM. Possible ways to approach the discussion are:

- to study worship books, hymnals, and confessional statements of the denominations; to review study materials of the represented denominations;
- to invite a judicatory representative, a nearby seminary faculty member, or another person with special expertise to lead a study event on the sacraments;

- to use and reflect on a variety of liturgies, especially for the Lord's Supper.

It is important in the study to include children and youth. Since they don't bring with them a lifetime of assumptions, associations, and expectations, they can often help their congregations to see what meanings are actually communicated in liturgical practices.

The study process will not only be a stimulating experience, but it will also help remind members that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not the private possessions of a single congregation or denomination, but more properly belong to the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Sensitivity to the history, traditions, and teachings of each denomination represented in an ESM is a necessity. It may also be important to set aside regular times when the congregations are encouraged to offer expressions of the sacraments particular to each denomination represented in their ESM. As congregations, we are not free to do whatever works for us; we are accountable to other people, congregations, and denominations.

A **third step** involves comparing local practice and denominational tradition with the understandings that emerge among members of the Ecumenical Shared Ministry. In what ways does local practice reflect denominational statements and the ecumenical convergence expressed in BEM? How should the ESM's liturgical practice be changed to incorporate important insights from other denominations? The intent of this step is not conformity, but discernment. How can the gifts of others help this congregation renew its worship life? Making such comparisons will recall dimensions of sacramental life that have been forgotten over time. They may also provide new ways of expressing long-cherished beliefs about the sacraments.

Think of the process of determining liturgical practice as a three-way conversation among the historic and current practices of congregations participating in the the ESM, the teachings of the denominations represented in the ESM, and the understandings of the wider ecumenical community of faith. The conversation may raise difficult questions and pose dilemmas for the ESM, and agreement about worship practices may be hard to achieve. Conversation should not be a once-and-for-all event but part of an

ongoing process of teaching, learning, re-shaping, reforming, and renewing. It is hoped that through continuing study, an ESM may find in Baptism and the Lord's Supper rich experiences of grace, nurturing faith and unity, rather than occasions for compromise or dispute.

MODELS FOR MISSION

Both unity and justice-seeking must always be present in ESMs. While every Christian congregation seeks to be in mission in various ways, the inclusiveness that characterizes ESM congregations is always an intentional part of their life. Because they frequently reach out to the community in ecumenical ways, ESMs are especially effective in their mission witness. These are some of the ways ESM churches are actually working in mission.

Neutral Zone. A suburban ESM initiated a youth program with ten other churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. Together they created *Neutral Zone*, a place for recreation and supervised dancing and an alternative to drug abuse and gang activities. Gatherings at *Neutral Zone* attract over 300 youth on a regular basis. A new program for parent education, initiated by the churches and held in the schools, is changing family life.

A Piece of My Mind. Designed by ESM congregations to meet the needs of the community, *A Piece of My Mind* offers a forum for well-known public figures to speak their minds. Every fourth Monday, people from throughout the metropolitan area gather to hear and respond to political or business leaders, media personalities, and educational experts who represent various points of view. *A Piece of My Mind* offers opportunities for speakers and members of the community to learn from one another.

Outreach and Mission. ESMs frequently initiate community-wide ecumenical events (which include other congregations, too), i.e., a Thanksgiving meal for the homeless, a Billy Graham rally, a theological study group, a musical performance. A partner-churches program

that links congregations of different races or economic classes is sometimes spurred on by an ESM which has already overcome differences.

Counseling Center. When the counseling load at an ESM became too great for the pastor to handle, the congregation developed an ecumenical counseling center. Housed at the church, the center meets the needs of both the congregation and the community.

Confirmation. A joint confirmation class is held in a federated ESM and linked with other denominations in the community. Teachers teach basic Christian history and beliefs from several denominations, and only after this foundation is established do denominational perspectives become part of the focus. ESM youth are exposed to each denomination that is part of their ESM congregation.

Youth. An ESM youth group decided to do an international work project in Mexico. Instead of going it alone, they decided to include youth from regional congregations in the three denominations of the ESM. Youth from each of the participating congregations planned and carried out the nine-day project. The experience of expanding relationships and deepening faith led to a repeat of this ecumenical project in succeeding years.

Adult Learning Center. An ESM with a good adult education program sensed a need in the community for spiritual growth with a theologically open, ecumenical base. The result was an ecumenical learning center in conjunction with congregations from six different denominations. Classes such as "Getting in Touch with Your Higher Power" or "Fighting Cynicism" attract participation by people outside the church. Liaisons with a community college, a Roman Catholic college, and a United Methodist seminary provide challenging classes and teachers.

Evangelism. Evangelism in a rapidly growing ESM has three emphases that came from the congregation's vision statement: "Christ-centered, theologically open, ecumenical." Invariably, new attendees refer to the freedom, openness, and diversity of the congregation that is directly related to being ecumenical, as a

major reason for attending or joining this ESM.

Inclusiveness. One black and two white ESM congregations joined together to offer a class on "Breaking Molds," taught by the pastors, an African-American man and woman, and an Euro-American man. Topics included liberation theology, black theology, and womanist theology. The interracial class members refused to stop meeting at the end of the course, and continue to gather monthly at different congregations for Sunday worship, lunch, and discussion.

Ecumenical Shared Ministry is an exciting and faithful response to God's call to the Church to be the body of Christ. Rather than forming an Ecumenical Shared Ministry for the sake of survival, congregations are discovering new and creative forms of ministry. Diversity in a Christian context enriches individuals, communities, denominational structures, and our world. The Maryvale Declaration lifts up Ecumenical Shared Ministry as one of God's gifts for the future of the church:

It is incumbent on churches to seek faithful and effective ways of providing ministry and mission in the 21st century. ESM is a practical and faithful approach to ministry that can provide dynamic and quality leadership to congregations who seek to experience the life-giving proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁰

RENEWING AND SUSTAINING ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

The histories of every ESM involve at least one common element: hospitality. When pastors, programs or buildings are to be shared, it can quite literally mean that one congregation must "welcome" another congregation into its own "house." In ESMs where the denominational affiliation of the pastors alternate, congregations must learn to be hospitable to differing liturgical or theological traditions and leadership styles. When an ESM is established as a new congregation, welcoming the newcomer must become a weekly discipline. And when old, established congregations join forces, members must be

ready to learn and appreciate new and unfamiliar traditions.

Members of vital and growing ESM congregations will remember that hospitality was the key to their founding. They will build on that heritage by regularly examining their current practice of hospitality, asking such questions as:

- Do we continue to be open to diverse perspectives and varied faith traditions among our members?
- Do we seek to be an inclusive congregation where all in our community are welcomed and no one is excluded, honoring in both word and deed the multi-racial, multi-cultural character of the Church in each community?
- Do we make our building and our worship accessible to all, regardless of physical abilities?
- Do we open our doors and invite groups to use our facilities for the welfare of our community? Is our facility seen as a "meeting house" for the community, or only as a "home" for the congregation?
- Are children welcome in worship and congregational life? Is our educational space available to youth after school and not just on Sundays?
- Do we make space in our worship for new hymns, new forms of prayer, new ways of hearing and reflecting on the Scripture?

- Do we see God's mission as a witness to Christ's love for the stranger and the outcast whether it be the immigrant, the AIDS patient, the homeless, the addicted, the ex-offender?

- Do our members regularly invite others to visit for worship, and do we invite visitors to consider making a commitment to discipleship and membership?

- Is the way to the future seen as a sad journey away from a secure and comfortable past, or do we welcome the future, with all of its uncertainties, as the place where God will visit us with new challenge, promise, and joy?

All congregations, not just ESMs, will find renewal in bold hospitality, bearing witness to the biblical stories of Abraham welcoming strangers, or Elizabeth welcoming not only the visit of Mary, but also the promise of Mary's child, or Jesus welcoming the woman at the well or challenging Zacchaeus to offer hospitality in his home. ESMs have a particular call to practice biblical hospitality. Typically, ESMs have a memory of the joy and challenge of hospitality from the time of their origin. When this is no longer evident, ESMs can reclaim that memory and revitalize their current practice of hospitality. This will sustain and renew them for faithful mission and ministry into the future.

**Administrative
Issues for
Ecumenical Shared
Ministries**

CREDENTIALS FOR CLERGY

Introduction

Denominations vary considerably in their willingness and ability to include the pastors of other denominations in their internal affairs. If either full or partial participation in another denomination is allowed, pastors of ESMs face:

- twice as many meetings;
- double the paper work;
- crowded calendars and desks.

Here are some advantages:

- Having credentials in more than one denomination provides the pastor with more possibilities for support, nurture, resources, and perspectives.
- Awareness of the theological traditions of each of the denominations particularly enriches both the pastor and the congregation. It is important for the pastor of an ESM to affirm the heritage of each of the denominations.
- Accountability to (or collegiality with) another denomination can be a blessing if the "new" denomination has standards that help a pastor grow.

Dual Credentials

Pastors who seek credentials in a denomination other than their own need to contact the appropriate judicatory official:

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.:

executive minister or the area minister;

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

the executive presbyter or the stated clerk of the presbytery;

United Church of Christ:

the conference or association minister;

The United Methodist Church:

the district superintendent or the chairperson of the district committee on ministry;

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

regional or area minister;

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

synodical bishop.

The process for granting dual status varies. However, most denominations require:

- ministry

- some examination of the pastor's qualifications;
- inquiry into the pastor's training or experience that demonstrate his or her gifts for ministry;
- inquiry into his or her sense of call;
- some examination of the pastor's understanding and affirmation of the faith;
- traditions and polity of the denomination;
- references testifying to the pastor's faith and gifts for ministry.

The polity or government of a denomination affects the process of granting dual status. The United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are congregational in nature. United Church of Christ congregations agree to work in covenant with one another in settings such as associations, conferences, and General Synod, and to be bound to, but not by, one another. Both the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) require that pastors have a corporate call from the congregation to serve it as a minister of word and sacrament, while credentials for pastors come through the regional judicatories.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is representative. Pastors are members of presbyteries, and local churches are represented in presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly. United Methodists are connectional in their polity. Consultation is held with the local church, but credentials are granted by the annual conference.

American Baptist Church congregations, though loosely organized into regional associations, have final authority in hiring pastors and giving them credentials for ministry.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), through the Division of Ministry, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, has developed categories of ministry leadership both rostered and synodically authorized. These categories of ministry leadership, approved by the ELCA Church Council, provide the synods of the ELCA with a range of different leadership categories by which to plan for ministry and mission in this time and for the future.

Licensing, Commissioning, Certifying

Not all pastors serving Ecumenical Shared Ministries are ordained. Some are licensed or commissioned. Licensing procedures vary with

each denomination. An American Baptist Church congregation may license a person to be their pastor. The license is valid only in that congregation. The United Church of Christ may license a person to perform a specific service, including administration of the sacraments, for a specified period of time, to a particular setting. Commissioned lay preachers are called in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to lead worship and preach in a specified place for a three-year period. They may not perform marriages or baptisms but may, when authorized by the presbytery, serve the Lord's Supper. Provided certain educational standards are met, a United Methodist certified local pastor may be appointed to a local church and licensed annually to perform the sacraments and marriages in that charge.

DENOMINATIONAL FORMS OF MINISTERIAL OFFICE

American Baptist Churches

Ordained: Word and Ordinances (lifelong).

Licensed Pastor: Word and Ordinances (limited to a specific local church).

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ordained: Ministers of Word and Sacrament, lifelong, approved by candidacy committee, assigned to synod to await first call. Pastors may serve in fully stipended positions, but they may also serve in Shared-Time Ministry or Non-Stipendiary Ministry.

Rostered Lay Ministers: Approved for service in ELCA by a candidacy committee and assigned to a synod to await first call. They enter service in one of three categories: Commissioned Associates in Ministry, Consecrated Diaconal Minister, Consecrated Deaconess.

Synodically Authorized Ministers: Equipped through a program of preparation developed by the synod, authorized by the synod bishop to a specific ministry for a specific period of time. Authorized or licensed ministries that may be

considered include: Lay Minister of the Word, Lay Minister of Word and Sacrament, Worship Leader, Catechist, Evangelist, Synodical Missionary, or Synodical Deacon.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Ordained: Minister of Word and Sacrament or Teaching Elder (lifelong). Member of a Presbytery.

Elder: Lifelong office, though ruling elders have terms as members of the Session.

Deacon: Lifelong office, though deacons are members of the Board for limited terms.

Commissioned Lay Pastor: Leads worship and preaches (specific time and place; it has been recommended that this person be an ordained elder).

The United Church of Christ

Ordained: Word and Sacrament, pastor, teacher (lifelong).

Licensed: Word and Sacrament (limited in time and place).

Commissioned: Ministry on behalf of the local congregation that does not call for Word and Sacrament (specific time and place).

The United Methodist Church

Ordained Elder: Ordained to Service, Word, Sacrament and Order (lifelong) itinerant and under the appointment of the bishop; can be appointed to extension ministries as well as to the local parish.

Ordained Deacon: Ordained to Word and Service (life long) non-itinerant and under the appointment of the bishop to both a place of service in the world and a local congregation.

Diaconal Minister: Consecrated to ministries of service as a lay professional; non-itinerant, serving in a position approved by the bishop. No new candidates accepted after January 1, 1997.

Deaconess: A woman approved by the General Board of Global Ministries, commissioned by a bishop for ministries of service, non-itinerant.

Licensed Local Pastor: Licensed to sacramental and pastoral ministry within within a specific congregation under the supervision of an elder.

Commissioned Minister: One who has completed the educational requirements for ordination as either a deacon or elder and is in probationary relationship with the annual conference. If

the commissioned minister is appointed as a pastor of a local church he/she will be licensed as a local pastor.

LIVING IN GRACE: POLITY AND PRACTICES

Introduction

In an ESM, every congregation and denomination brings to the relationship assumptions, affirmations, faith, and traditions that define the community and how it works, lives, and carries out the ministry of Jesus Christ. The members of every faith community have at least an unspoken sense of why they do things one way and not another. A pastor called to work with an ESM will need to understand and appreciate the variety of traditions that influence each congregation's understanding of church governance.

Often a relatively small set of assumptions about a denomination's polity will be expressed in key words or phrases, ideas or concepts that surface in books expressing the denomination's polity and in the day-to-day work and life of people in the church. (For specific resource material, see Appendix A.)

We cannot adequately introduce the polity and normative practices of several denominations in this section. We can, however, raise questions that will help a pastor explore the governance of the ESM and its constituent congregations.

What key denominational documents inform ministry?

Each denomination in an ESM is governed by certain key documents, which vary in length and complexity and in the authority they carry. A pastor working with several denominations in an ESM should know what these basic documents are and what authority they have for the local congregation. Lay leaders are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with these documents.

What authority do congregations have in denominations?

Denominations vary widely on the amount of authority given to the local congregation, local

boards and committees, conferences, presbyteries, associations, and general boards and agencies. ESM pastors and lay leaders should know how each denomination exercises authority in relation to each congregation. (For resources, consult judicatory staff or see the documents listed in Appendix A.)

What is the role of the pastor in the governing of the local church with the laity?

Does the pastor preside at official meetings of the congregation's governing body? Is the pastor a servant of the church with no role in its government? The pastor's role and authority for government will differ from one denomination to another. Understanding how the pastor functions within the polity of the local church is important for working in an ESM.

How is the relationship between pastor and congregations established?

Denominations have widely divergent practices and traditions for establishing a relationship between a specific pastor and a specific congregation. The differences can be a source of confusion and misunderstanding. Each ESM should address this issue and reach an agreement in consultation with denomination staff. Both pastor and congregation should understand the pastor-congregation relationship in the context of the polities and traditions of the participating denominations.

Who determines worship practices, forms, and liturgies?

Even though the congregations represented by an ESM may have come to agreements about the practice of worship, each denomination has its own expectations and understandings about the role of the pastor and laity in leading worship. ESM congregations should consider questions such as:

Are there prescribed liturgies, such as the Book of Common Prayer?

What role do laity play in designing and leading worship?

How are special services and rites viewed, planned, and understood (such as marriage, becoming a member of the church, recognition of ministry)?

Are congregations free to create new liturgies or

adapt denominational liturgies?
What are the norms for worship in each church in the Ecumenical Shared Ministry?

Where can I learn more?

Several books are important sources of information: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press), *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* (Abingdon Press, Nashville), and *Getting to Know You* (Consultation on Church Union). See particular articles such as these in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*: "Baptists," "Presbyterianism," "United Church of Christ," "Congregationalism" and "Methodist Churches." Look in *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* and in *Getting to Know You* for articles such as these: "American Baptist Churches in the USA," "Presbyterian Church (USA)," "United Church of Christ," "The United Methodist Church," "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," "The Christian Church" and "Disciples of Christ." *The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (W.C.C. or Erdmans) will be useful in many ways.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AN ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY

The budgeting process in an ESM can be challenging, particularly when dealing with the policies and practices of more than one denomination. But financial planning can also be a wonderful opportunity for discovering the strengths of each denomination's support of pastors, their ministries in the United States, and their mission programs around the globe.

Pastors should turn to their judicatory staff for answers to questions about how pastoral salaries and benefits are set, how a congregation's support of denominational mission work is determined, and where interpretive materials about mission beyond the local community can be obtained. The following list is not exhaustive, but does suggest the kind of questions an ESM pastor and lay leaders need to ask:

Pastoral Salary and Housing

Who sets the pastor's salary? Must the pastor's

salary be approved by a judicatory official? Is there a minimum salary? If so, who sets the minimum? How is it established? Is it a guideline, a recommendation, or a requirement?

Are there denominational sources of salary support for congregations that cannot provide the full amount of salary and benefits needed?

What are the standards for providing the pastor with housing or with a housing allowance?

Employee Benefits

Is there a requirement that any of the following benefits be provided to the pastor:

- pension benefits
- death benefits or life insurance,
- disability benefits
- health care benefits or insurance?

What benefit plans do the denominations offer? Who administers the plans? How are people enrolled? On what basis are contributions or premiums determined?

Who is the contact person for information about benefits? It is recommended that the pastor remain in or participate in his or her own denomination's pension program. Are there plans available for lay employees of the church?

Does a judicatory body require that any of the following be paid by the local church: continuing education, travel, other professional business expenses?

Property

Are there denominational insurance programs available? Do judicatory leaders need to be consulted before engaging in significant property improvements, additions, etc.? Are there denominational resources (grants, loans, consulting services) available for renovation or building projects?

Program

What resources, if any, do denominations offer in support of a congregation's music, educational, youth, camping, and community ministry programs?

Will the congregation use curricula or other resources from only one denomination? Both denominations? Neither?

Support of Denominational Programs and Mission

How does a congregation support denominational mission work as well as the work of judicatory and national staff? Is this amount set by the judicatory? Is it determined by church size? Is it a negotiated amount? Is it a guideline or a requirement?

Who pays for travel and housing for a congregation's delegates to denominational meetings? Most denominations have special offerings throughout the year. Which ones will the congregation receive? How will the offering be divided if it is to go to both denominations? In half? By percentage according to membership size?²¹

One final reminder: Like any congregation, an ESM needs to have an annual financial audit and should secure appropriate insurance and bonding for those in the congregation who have financial responsibilities.

PROPERTY GUIDELINES

A strong component in the identity of a local congregation is its place of worship and its other physical facilities. This is equally true for an Ecumenical Shared Ministry. However, ESMs face some unique property issues that require careful attention.

Each ESM will have its own understanding of property issues, depending on the nature of the participating denominations, the agreements reached in the formation of the ESM, and factors that are unique to the local situation. The fact that different congregations and denominations understand property in different ways makes it impossible to provide ready solutions that address the property issues of every ESM.

However, the following themes and questions are common to many ESMs:

Is the property owned by the local congregation or held in trust for a denomination? Are there any restrictions on disposition of the property? Must the property be insured? If so, by whom?

What are the denominational requirements with respect to purchasing, mortgaging, developing, or selling real property held by the church?

Should a local church be incorporated in order to purchase, own, sell, or transfer property? Are the deeds to real property filed with the appropriate authorities and in the correct name? Who has an interest in receiving and/or selling properties donated to the church?

If property ceases to be used for religious purposes or if the congregation seeks to sever its relationship with a denomination, does ownership of the property revert to the denomination or to an agency or judicatory of the denomination?

If the ESM agreement calls for a single new facility in place of the two or more facilities previously used by the constituent congregations, issues such as those listed below must be addressed:

Will having a new facility encourage the ESM to establish a new identity? In what ways will the new facility help the congregations to bring their unique traditions and identities to the new ESM?

What will happen to the facilities previously used by each congregation? Who owns the new facility?²²

Are financial resources for the new facility available through the denominations or other sources? Are consulting services available? How much emotional investment do the congregations have in their former facilities? What symbols should be left behind? Which should be placed in a new building? Will bringing only some of the symbols to the new facility cause division?

All aspects of the issues of property call for a clear working understanding of the expectations of each denomination participating in the ESM.

A Message for
Those Working with
Ecumenical Shared
Ministries

AN OPEN LETTER TO NEW ESM PASTORS

Dear Pastor:

Congratulations! You are a part of an exciting movement in the life of the church. Ecumenical Shared Ministries are at the heart of the church's witness to the unity of the body of Christ and are at the cutting edge of ecumenical mission and ministry. As you begin the challenging work of serving your ESM, the Ecumenical Shared Ministry Roundtable would like to offer the following suggestions for your work:

- 1) Read the Constitution and Bylaws of the ESM to which you relate.
- 2) Make your installation service an opportunity to demonstrate the spirit of ecumenical unity and respect which mark ESM congregations.
- 3) Listen to the stories of your ESM. Congregations have usually become ESMs through a vision of unity, but they have also needed to overcome obstacles along the way. Some of these obstacles may even remain, in spite of their success. Listen for the troubles and hopes that brought these congregations together, problems and crises they faced and how these have been resolved, their perceptions of judicatory staff, compromises that were made in order to form the ESM and how these are regarded today, visions for the future, and unique opportunities for mission and ministry in your community. Offer your ESM ways to celebrate their story with you.
- 4) Learn from your congregation the rituals and traditions that are important to them. Let them guide you through their unique processes for running meetings, electing officers, receiving new members, officiating at weddings and funerals, observing the sacraments, and organizing themselves for ministry.
- 5) Meet the judicatory staff of all your partner denominations. Judicatory staff will be essential resource persons for exploration of new polities

and theology, rituals for celebration of the sacraments, expectations for pastoral involvement on boards and committees, denominational identity, ESM identity, and controversial issues facing each denomination.

6) Interpret all denominational programs and concerns fairly. Guard against being either non-denominational or focused on only one denomination. Instead, celebrate the rich heritage and unique traditions of all denominations involved in your ESM. Celebrate well the ecumenical identity of your ESM.

7) Review the educational and other resources of all your denominational partners. You are in the fortunate position of having vast resources at your fingertips. Make good use of this opportunity to find the best materials for your congregation.

8) Be prepared to fill out more forms and attend more meetings. Discover early what is necessary and what is optional and be ready to encourage your partner denominations toward greater flexibility around such areas as statistical reports and special offerings. Be prepared, also, in denominational meetings to witness to the significance and vitality of ESM congregations.

9) Embrace denominational differences as an opportunity to teach theology and Church history with your congregation.

10) Respect your ESM and envision the future with them. Diversity can be a wonderful catalyst for dynamic outreach, ministry and mission within the community you all serve.

Ecumenical Shared Ministries are an exciting paradigm for what it means to be Christ's Church. As you partake of their spirit of ecumenism, may you enjoy and learn.

AN OPEN LETTER TO LAY LEADERS OF ESMs

Dear Lay Leader:

Congratulations! You are already involved in, or are considering involvement in, an Ecumenical Shared Ministry. ESMs are special because of their relationship to more than one denomination. They are thus at the heart of the Church's witness to the unity of the body of Christ and are the cutting edge of the Church's ecumenical mission and ministry.

You have probably already discovered that Ecumenical Shared Ministries provide both opportunities and challenges. You will discover new and wonderful ways to worship together and to witness and be in mission to your community. But congregations who serve God together may also encounter conflicts around how to do their work. These hints may help:

1) Remember your stories. Take time to share stories about the former congregations as well as the story of how you have come together. This will help the old threads continue to be a part of the new fabric.

2) Respect each other's theology, polity, and traditions. Your ESM represents the Church's understanding that there are many ways to be faithful to God. Your differences can be the foundation for new theological awareness and strength. Celebrate your rich denominational heritage as well as your new ecumenical identity.

3) Listen for faultlines that may reveal old conflicts or new disagreements about the direction to which God calls your congregation. Remember that disagreement is not in itself unhealthy, and can, in fact, lead to wonderful new insights. Disagreement handled poorly can foster secrets and manipulative behavior which are not healthy in any congregation.

4) Be aware of all your partner denominations' resources in education, justice, stewardship mission and many other areas. Most congregations do not have easy access to such a rich treasury of materials. Be aware of the best each denomina-

tion has to offer in the area of worship. Be open to the history and the creativity of your various worship traditions.

5) Support your pastor. Keep in mind that your pastor will have the challenge of relating to more than one denomination. The pastor may be expected to attend twice as many meetings, deal with twice as much mail, and complete twice as many forms for your multiple denominations. Encourage your pastor to seek the support of your partner judicatory staff, and be ready to assist the pastor in your congregation's ministry, including taking responsibility for keeping track of some of the paperwork and helping the pastor to set priorities.

Ecumenical Shared Ministries are an exciting paradigm for what it means to be Christ's Church. You are a cause for celebration in your communities and within your partner denominations. As the Holy Spirit leads you to new ecumenical ventures, may you enjoy and learn.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JUDICATORY STAFF WHO WORK WITH ESMs

Dear Judicatory Staff:

Ecumenical Shared Ministries are unique situations which you will find challenging and sometimes frustrating. In order for you to work with them, you will need to learn more than you may have previously known about other denominations' placement processes, apportionments and regional askings, polities, theologies, worship rituals, and traditions. But ESMs are more than challenging. They are also at the heart of the church's witness to the unity of the body of Christ. They are actually living the oneness to which most of us can only aspire. As you begin the task of shepherding the ESMs in your judicatory, here are some suggestions for your work:

1) Read the Constitution and Bylaws of the ESMs to which you relate.

2) Listen to the stories of the ESMs. Listen espe-

cially for the troubles and hopes that brought these congregations together, problems and crises they faced and how these were resolved, their perceptions of judicatory staff, compromises that were made in order to form the ESM and how these are regarded today, visions for the future, and unique opportunities for mission and ministry in that community.

3) Learn the polity and traditions of your partner denominations, especially as these might relate to shared ministry. Knowledge of and respect for partner denominations' placement process and polity are especially necessary.

4) Meet your counterparts in partner denominations. Schedule visits to ESMs together and keep each other informed about their joys and struggles. Because many ESMs alternate pastoral leadership among their partner denominations, your relationship with your counterparts may determine how smoothly pastoral changes take place. Each of you will need to take special care to be available, to share information, and to consult with each other.

5) Initiate conversation with new ESM pastors who are serving congregations within your judicatory responsibility about the beliefs and

practices of your denomination. Topics of conversation may include such areas as rituals for celebration of the sacraments, expectations for pastoral involvement on boards and committees, denominational identity, and controversial issues facing your denomination. You may also need to walk them through the important documents of your polity or provide mentors to help them feel at home.

6) Be flexible with regard to mailings and forms from your office. Statistical reports and special offerings are just two areas that may be especially difficult for ESMs.

7) Respect your ESMs. Although some may be small or struggling financially, all are doing the work of Jesus Christ and have a special place in the life of their communities. All have something to teach us about Christian unity.

Ecumenical Shared Ministries are a new and exciting paradigm for what it means to be Christ's Church. They are a cause for celebration in your judicatory and in your denomination. As you partake of their spirit of ecumenism, may you enjoy and learn.

Notes

1. Published by The United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, 1995. CHARIS Ecumenical Center, Moorehead, Minnesota did the research supporting this document, hereafter referred to as the CHARIS report.
2. Stotts, Herbert E., et al, "The Federated Church Study," published by CHURCH SURVEYS: Boston University School of Theology, 1965.
3. Henceforth named the "Maryvale Declaration" found in Oswald, Roy and Jacobson, Arland D. *Ecumenical Shared Ministry: Bringing Congregations Together from Several Denominations*. Alban Institute. p. 34.
4. The following section is adapted from *Ecumenical Shared Ministry and The United Methodist Church*. Arland D. Jacobson and Judith P. Kerr, authors. Published by The United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, 1995.
5. Ibid, 15-26.
6. See Appendix B & C.
7. Some material in this section is drawn from *Ecumenical Shared Ministry and The United Methodist Church*. Additional material is found in Leadership Selection Manual of Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.
8. Baptism. "Eucharist and Ministry: Faith and Order" Paper No. 111. World Council of Churches, 1982.
9. Ibid, 2.
10. Ibid, 2-3.
11. Ibid, 5.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid, 10.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid, 11.
17. Ibid, 13.
18. Ibid, 14.
19. Ibid.
20. Op cit., footnote 3
21. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to make this determination, but whatever decision is made needs to be carefully determined and clearly communicated to the congregations and judicatory staff.
22. Ownership is, of course, a major issue. In some traditions, property is owned by the local congregation. In others, local church facilities are owned by an agency or judicatory of the denomination.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

DENOMINATIONAL STATEMENTS ON ECUMENICAL COMMITMENT

Each denomination has submitted the following materials as its official denominational statement on ecumenical commitment that might be important to Ecumenical Shared Ministries. They were also asked to list three resources they believed to be of primary assistance to ESM pastors and congregations.

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

American Baptists are summoned to our mission in common with all Christians. With the whole body of Christ, we also believe that God has been revealed in Jesus Christ as in no other, and that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18). We anticipate the day when every creature and all creation, on earth and beyond, will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11).

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in faithfulness to the Reformed theological position and to the biblical mandate, is deeply committed to the quest for Christian unity as expressed in the ecumenical movement. Both of the predecessor churches (United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church U.S.) were founding members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the National Council of Churches (NCCC). The United Presbyterian Church was a founding member of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), and the Presbyterian Church U.S. joined the consultation soon after it began. The two churches were also active in the founding of coalitions like the Joint Strategy and Action Committee and the Joint Educational Development program, as well as such international bodies as the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF).

Both churches sent delegates to the International Missionary Conference in 1910, that is generally cited as the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement, and were active in the three movements that evolved: the

International Missionary Council, the Life and Work movement, and the Faith and Order movement.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to manifest more visibility in the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ and will be open to the opportunities for conversation, cooperation, and action with other ecclesiastical bodies and secular groups.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek to initiate, maintain, and strengthen its relations to, and to engage in mission with, other Presbyterian and Reformed bodies and with other Christian denominations in the creation and strengthening of effective ecumenical agencies for common mission.

All governing bodies of the church, in consultation with the next higher governing body, shall be authorized to work with other Christian denominations in the creation and strengthening of effective ecumenical agencies for common mission.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will initiate and respond to approaches for conversations and common action with movements, organizations, and agencies of business, educational, cultural, and civic communities that give promise of assistance toward accomplishing the mission of the Church in the world. (*Book of Order* G-15.000)

Three Key Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Resources:

Book of Order, available through Distribution Management Services (DMS), 100 Witherspoon Street, Room 1A 1425, Louisville, KY 40202-1396, or by calling 1-800-524-2612 outside of Louisville; 569-5000 in Louisville. DMS Order OGA-95-004.

The Book of Confessions (Available through DMS). *Book of Common Worship*: for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, published by Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky. Available through Cokesbury, 1-800-672-1789.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The formation of the United Church of Christ in 1957 reflected both an ecumenical fact

and a hope. It represented an accomplished union of two church bodies – the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches. But it also expressed a hope that this union would also be a “uniting” church, nurturing the cause of Christian unity into the future.

The 1957 union was founded on a “Basis of Union” approved in 1949. It began with a Preamble that says, in part:

Affirming our devotion to one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our membership in the holy catholic Church, which is greater than any single Church and than all the Churches together; believing that denominations exist not for themselves but as parts of that Church, within which each denomination is to live and labor and, if need be, die; and confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world, and hearing with a deepened sense of responsibility the prayer of our Lord “that they all may be one,” we do now declare ourselves to be one body.

This ecumenical mandate is given symbolic prominence through the symbol of the United Church of Christ that includes Christ’s prayer, “that they all may be one.” The denomination also takes for its motto, “united and uniting.”

Ecumenical commitments are expressed through membership in the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, and the regular international consultations of United and Uniting Churches. The United Church of Christ was a founding member of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), and approved the covenanting proposal, “Churches in Covenant Communion,” in 1995. Since 1981 the United Church of Christ has been in fellowship (“kirchengemeinschaft”) with the Evangelical Church of the Union (Germany), and since 1985 has been in a relationship of full communion, called Ecumenical Partnership, with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It has been a regular participant in Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue in North America and in Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue. In October 1998 it joined with three other denominations out of the Lutheran-Reformed traditions [ELCA, the PC(USA) and the RCA] to celebrate the adoption of the

Formula of Agreement, which recognizes mutually the ministry and sacraments of each denomination. The United Church of Christ is also an active participant in regional and local councils of churches. The President of the United Church of Christ serves as its chief ecumenical representative.

Three Key United Church of Christ Resources:

The Book of Worship, Office for Church Life and Leadership, New York, NY, 1986.

The Manual of Ministry, Office for Church Life and Leadership, Cleveland, Ohio, 1991.

The History and Program of the UCC, Published by the United Church Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1991. All are available from United Church of Christ Resources 1-800-325-7061.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The formation of The United Methodist Church in 1968 was a merger between the Evangelical United Brethren Church (itself a union of the United Brethren and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ) and The Methodist Church, which, in 1939 was formed by The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and The Methodist Protestant Church.

Scattered throughout *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* are numerous references to its ecumenical life and commitments, but the most extensive treatment is located in the Constitution, the Doctrinal Standards, and in the section entitled “Our Theological Task.”

Women have been fully ordained since 1956, and women bishops have been elected since 1980.

The United Methodist Church is a founding member of the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), adopting its “Churches in Covenant Communion” in 1966. It participates in formal ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Episcopal Church at international, national and regional levels. Wherever a local or regional Council of Churches or Interfaith Council exists, the United Methodist Church is present.

A bishop is always the chief ecumenical officer for the denomination, assisted by the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, which, itself, carries mandates as follows:

(The Book of Discipline, 1996)

Section XIII. General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns

¶1902. Purpose

The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns shall exercise its ecumenical leadership role in seeking to fulfill two major responsibilities in the context of the search for the unity of the human community and the renewal of creation:

- To advocate and work toward the full reception of the gift of Christian unity in every aspect of the Church's life and to foster approaches to ministry and mission which more fully reflect the oneness of Christ's Church in the human community.
- To advocate and work for the establishment and strengthening of relationships with other living faith communities, to further dialogue with persons of other faiths, cultures, and ideologies.

¶1903 follows with a section entitled Responsibilities of the General Commission. There are 23 specific ones, each of which assigns particular ecumenical tasks to the General Commission.

In the 1996 Book of Discipline the following official statements of ecumenical commitment can be found.

Constitution

¶5, Article V. Ecumenical Relations

As part of the Church Universal, The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the Church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will seek, and

work for, unity at all levels of church life: through world relationships with other Methodist churches and united churches related to The Methodist Church or The Evangelical United Brethren Church, through councils of churches, and through plans of union with churches of Methodist or other denominational traditions.

Doctrinal Standards

¶60^c. Section 1 - Our Doctrinal Heritage "Basic Christian Affirmations"

With other Christians, we declare the essential oneness of the Church in Christ Jesus. This rich heritage of shared Christian belief finds expression in our hymnody and liturgies. Our unity is affirmed in the historic creeds as we confess one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. It is also experienced in joint ventures of ministry and in various forms of ecumenical cooperation.

Nourished by common roots of this shared Christian heritage, the branches of Christ's Church have developed diverse traditions that enlarge our store of shared understandings. Our avowed ecumenical commitment as United Methodists is to gather our own doctrinal emphases into the larger Christian unity, there to be made more meaningful in a richer whole.

If we are to offer our best gifts to the common Christian treasury, we must make a deliberate effort as a church to strive for critical self-understanding. It is as Christians involved in ecumenical partnership that we embrace and examine our distinctive heritage.

¶63. Section 4 - Our Theological Task "Ecumenical Commitment"

Christian unity is founded on the theological understanding that through faith in Jesus Christ we are made members-in-common of the one Body of Christ. Christian unity is not an option; it is a gift to be received and expressed.

United Methodists respond to the theological, biblical, and practical mandates for Christian unity by firmly committing ourselves to the cause of Christian unity at local, national, and world levels. We invest ourselves in many ways by which mutual recognition of churches, of members, and of ministries may lead us to sharing in Holy Communion with all of God's people.

Knowing that denominational loyalty is always subsumed in our life in the Church of Jesus Christ, we welcome and celebrate the rich experience of United Methodist leadership in church councils and consultations, in multilateral and bilateral dialogues, as well as in other forms of ecumenical convergence that have led us to the healing of churches and nations.

We see the Holy Spirit at work in making the unity among us more visible.

Concurrently, we have entered into serious interfaith encounters and explorations between Christians and adherents of other living faiths of the world. Scripture calls us to be both neighbors and witnesses to all peoples. Such encounters require us to reflect anew on our faith and seek guidance for our witness among neighbors of other faiths. We then rediscover that the God who has acted in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the whole world is also Creator of all humankind, the One who is "above all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4: 6)

As people bound together on one planet, we see the need for a self-critical view of our own tradition and accurate appreciation of other traditions. In these encounters, our aim is not to reduce doctrinal differences to some lowest common denominator of religious agreement but to raise all such relationships to the highest possible level of human fellowship and understanding.

We labor together with the help of God toward the salvation, health, and peace of all people. In respectful conversations and in practical cooperation, we confess our Christian faith and strive to display the manner in which Jesus Christ is the life and hope of the world.

¶207 Section III. Ecumenical Shared Ministries

Local churches, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may respond to opportunities for ecumenical resource sharing in their communities by creating ecumenical shared ministries, working with local congregations of other Christian churches to enhance ministry, make wise stewardship of limited resources, and live out the ecumenical spirit in creative ways responsive to the needs of God's peoples as well as to opportunities for expanded mission and ministry.

¶208.

Ecumenical shared ministries are ecumenical congregations formed by a local United Methodist church and one or more local congregations of other Christian traditions. Forms of ecumenical shared ministries include: (a) a federated church, in which one congregation is related to two or more denominations, with persons choosing to hold membership in one or the other of the denominations; (b) a union church, in which a congregation with one unified membership roll is related to two denominations; (c) a merged church, in which two or more congregations of different denominations form one congregation that relates to only one of the constituent denominations; (d) a yoked parish, in which congregations of different denominations share a pastor.

¶209.

Congregations entering into an ecumenical shared ministry shall develop a clear covenant of mission, set of bylaws, or articles of agreement that addresses financial and property matters, church membership, denominational askings and apportionments, committee structure and election procedures, terms and provisions of the pastorate, reporting procedures, relationship with the parent denominations, and matters related to amending or dissolving the agreement. In the formation of an ecumenical shared ministry, paragraphs 245, 249.1 and 249.2 shall be followed in its organization. In an interdenominational local church merger. Paragraphs 2546 and 2547 shall be followed. In the case of federated and union churches, paragraph 2547 shall be followed.

¶210.

Cabinets, conference staff and other leaders shall be expected to work with ecumenical shared ministries at their inception as well as in maintaining avenues of vital relationship and connection to The United Methodist Church, while recognizing that such avenues must also be maintained with the denominational partners in ministry.

¶211.

Cabinets shall be urged to give priority in the appointment process to the providing of ecu-

menical shared ministries with pastoral leaders who have demonstrated commitment to ecumenism and who exhibit a clear appreciation for a variety of denominational expressions and politics.

Four Key United Methodist Resources:

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 1996. The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 1996. The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) and *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992). The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

Frank, Thomas Edward, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*. Abingdon Press: Nashville, Tenn. 1997.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Commitment to the visible unity of the Church is the defining ethos and vocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Its origin lies in two nineteenth century movements—led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell (Disciples) and Barton Warren Stone (Christians)—committed to the restoring of the faith and unity of the New Testament church. They protested all sectarians and division in the church and society, and called all Christians to be visibly one, especially in sharing the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. In 1832 these two movements united and became one church.

When the modern ecumenical movement emerged in the early 20th century, Disciples accepted the call and challenges it represented. They saw this movement as a fulfillment of their historical journey. So Disciples participated in the historic World Ministry Conference at Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1910, and all the other phases of the new ecumenism—the International Missionary Movement, Faith and Order, Life and Work, and the peace movement. In the same period they participated in early attempts at church union, namely the Conference on Organic Union (1918) and the Conference on Church Union (1946-1957). Disciples have always believed that the fulfillment of Christ's

prayer "that they all may be one" (John 17) requires visible unity in faith, sacraments, ministry, and mission. Cooperation is only a step along the way to full communion and mission.

Their ecumenical impulse led the Disciples to become founding members of the World Council of Churches (1948) and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (1950). They have participated extensively in local and state councils of church. The witness of such ecumenical bodies are claimed as "our witness." The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one of the nine member communions of the Consultation on Church Union, seeking a church "truly catholic, truly evangelical, and truly reformed," and in 1995 approved the proposal for "covenant communion." After many decades of conversations with the United Church of Christ and its predecessors, in 1995, Disciples entered into a relationship of full communion, called Ecumenical Partnership with the United Church of Christ. A Common Global Ministries Board, linking their overseas programs, is a central expression of this partnership.

In their global expression Disciples churches have entered into united churches with other traditions: Congregational, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist. These united churches are in Japan, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Zaire, southern Africa, North India, Jamaica and England. Internationally Disciples pursue their ecumenical vision through the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.

Three Key Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Resources:

The Design of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Yearbook & Directory published annually, Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, MO.

Criteria and Policy of the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, MO, 1993.

Chalice Worship: Liturgical Resources for Disciples of Christ, Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, MO, Colbert S. Cartwright, Editor, 1995.

APPENDIX B

ELEMENTS NEEDED IN AN ESM COVENANTAL AGREEMENT, BYLAWS, OR CONSTITUTION

I. Introduction

- A. Type of ESM
- B. Process for Formation
- C. Goals of Process

II. Name of Church(es)

- A. Denominations
- B. Affiliation/Judicatory Bodies
- C. Incorporation
- D. Date of Establishment

III. Mission/Vision Statement and Statement of Purpose

- A. Theological Assumptions
- B. Statement of Faith

IV. Worship

- A. Sacraments
 - 1. Description
 - 2. Observances
- B. Worship Service
 - 1. Times
 - 2. Format
 - 3. Liturgies
- C. Historical Considerations
- D. Plan for Managing Differences

V. Membership

- A. Membership Qualifications, Obligations, Removals
- B. Reception of New Members
- C. Membership Questions (some put this under Statement of Faith)
- D. Membership Records – Internal and Denominational
- E. Relationship to Denominations

VI. Administration

- A. Form of Government
 - 1. Governing Body/Board/Council
 - 2. Membership or Election: Tenure, Vacancies, Meetings
(may include order of business meeting)
 - 3. Committees - Duties and Responsibilities

(list each with purpose, duties, and responsibilities)

- 4. Trustees - including Buildings, Grounds, and Parsonage
- B. Budget Considerations (division of expenses if yoked)
 - 1. Election of Parish Treasurer
 - 2. Provision for Reporting
 - 3. Provision for Audit
- C. Parish Council (advisory, depending on size and type of ESM)
- D. Education and Confirmation/Program Planning
- E. Congregational/Annual Meeting: Reports, Election of Officers, Nominations, Quorum, Time, Date
- F. Organizational Chart

VII. Finance and Property

- A. Capital Trust Funds
- B. Sale or Mortgage
- C. Maintenance
- D. Incorporation
- E. Building, Grounds, Parsonage

VIII. Ministerial Staff

- A. How Called, How Appointed
- B. Responsibilities
- C. Relationship to Denominations
- D. Housing
- E. Salary
- F. Benefits including health and pension
- G. Disciplinary Procedures
- H. Length of Pastorate
- I. Termination

IX. Staff/Parish Relations

- A. Membership
- B. Relationship to Congregations/Affiliations
- C. Responsibilities
- D. Meetings

X. Relationship with Denominations

- A. Accountability
- B. Division of Membership (also in membership section)
- C. Election of Delegates/Representatives
- D. Grievances/Conflict Resolution
- E. Missional Priorities
- F. Pastoral Membership

XI. Rules

- A. Rules of Conduct
- B. Quorum
- C. Right to Vote
- D. Duration of Bylaws/Covenant/ Constitution /Articles

XII. Amendments and/or Dissolution

- A. Review of Bylaws
- B. Procedures for Dissolution
- C. Division of Property
- D. Amendments
- E. Approval by Parish Council/Congregations/ Judicatories

APPENDIX C

A SAMPLE COVENANTAL AGREEMENT FOR AN ESM

Articles of Agreement for Shared Ministry

What follows are the Articles of Agreement of an actual ESM between a United Methodist and two Presbyterian congregations served by a single pastor. The actual names of the congregations have been changed for presentation purposes.

Disclaimer: This document represents the judicatory agreement which was reached.

It is offered as a sample of the work necessary in order to meet all administrative requirements. For samples involving other denominations or your specific circumstances, please contact appropriate judicatory staff for the applicable denominations.

ARTICLE I - Parish and Church Identity

A. Recognizing that all Christian churches are part of the "one, holy, catholic church" [Apostles' Creed] and that all persons who profess faith in Jesus Christ are members of the Church Universal [The Book of Order, G-4.0000, The Book of Discipline 1992, pp. 21-23], the congregations of the Country Town United Methodies Church (A), and the Country Presbyterian Church (B), and the Country Presbyterian Church (C), agree to join in a Shared Ministry which is to be called the "Shared Ministry Parish."

B. Each individual church is to maintain its identity, organizational structure, and denominational relationship. The governing body of each congregation is responsible for the program of each congregation, yet the congregations may work cooperatively in program.

C. These three churches share the services of one pastor. The pastor will divide his/her time as needed among the three congregations in order to meet the expectations for ministry and give leadership to the congregations as agreed to by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) of the parish.

ARTICLE II - Ecumenical Relationship

A. The congregations shall be governed in accordance with The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church or The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), respectively. When the constitutions of the denominations differ in respect to this Shared Ministry, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the others are permissive. The pastor will comply with the mandatory provisions of The Book of Discipline or Book of The Order of the Pastor's own denomination, seeking at all times to follow the guidelines for the respective denomination of each individual church.

B. United Methodist pastors shall seek enrollment in the Presbytery as temporary members and abide by the discipline of the Presbytery in serving the Presbyterian congregations.

C. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) pastors shall seek the approval of the Annual Conference to serve in this appointment, and abide by The Book of Discipline of the UMC in serving the United Methodist Congregation.

D. The pastor is expected to attend all meetings of the Presbytery and Annual Conference, and is expected to assume some responsibilities in both.

E. The governing bodies of all three congregations, the PPRC Committee and the Parish Council shall have the authority to access the appropriate denominational officials from both the United Methodist and Presbyterian churches as they deem necessary.

ARTICLE III -The Parish Council

A. A Parish Council shall be formed to oversee the shared ministry.

1. Membership in the Parish Council shall be as follows: "Town UMC (A)" to have four members, "Country Presbyterian (B)" to have two members, "Country Presbyterian (C)" two members, and the pastor.

2. Each church will select its own representatives for a two-year term. At least one-member from each congregation should be a member of that congregation's governing body.

3. The Parish Council shall be empowered to administer matters relative to the shared ministry

subject to the approval of their respective governing bodies.

4. The Parish Council shall meet quarterly. Additional meetings may be called at the request of the pastor or the officers.

5. The officers of the Council:

(a) The council shall select its own officers (Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer) and,

(b) The pastor shall serve as temporary chairperson at any organizational meeting.

(c) It is not necessary for the Treasurer to be a member of the Parish Council.

B. The time of services shall be set to meet the needs of all three congregations in as much as is possible. Seasonal or permanent changes in the times of services shall be recommended through the Parish Council and must have the approval of the governing bodies of all three congregations.

ARTICLE IV - The Pastor

A. The calling or appointing, releasing or transferring, of any pastor shall be done in accordance with the policies of the pastor's own denomination. In order to promote unity and mutual relations in this Shared Ministry, within this process full consideration shall be given to the needs and desires of all three congregations, and the officials of the other denominations involved shall be involved in communications concerning these decisions.

B. Insofar as possible, the denominational affiliation of the pastor shall be rotated at the time of a vacancy.

C. A PPRC shall be formed with members from each of the three churches, to counsel with the pastor on matters pertaining to the pastor's relationship with the congregations of the parish. Town United Methodist Church (A) may have up to eight representatives in addition to the Lay Member to the Annual Conference, Country Presbyterian (B) may have up to three representatives, and Country Presbyterian (C) may have up to two representatives. The representatives of the Presbyterian Churches shall be currently serving on the sessions. The members of the PPRC from United Methodist Church (A) shall serve as the Local Church Advisory Committee for that church under the Book of Discipline. The Shared Ministry Parish PPRC shall serve as a parish per-

sonnel committee.

D. Matters pertaining to the pastor's employment, benefits, and salary shall be in accordance with the pastor's own denomination and have the approval of the congregations or charge conference respectively. The compensation of the pastor and any other employees shall be recommended annually by the PPRC.

E. The PPRC shall meet at least annually with the appropriate officials from both denominations to keep them informed of its work and review the pastor's relationship with the congregations of the parish.

ARTICLE V - Other Employees

A. The Parish may employ a secretary or other employees as deemed necessary by the Parish Council, PPRC and the governing bodies of the congregations.

B. The PPRC shall have responsibility for employment, review, and oversight of all parish employees. The pastor shall be the supervisor of all parish employees.

C. The Parish shall be responsible for the payment of the employer's share of FICA, and all other taxes required by law for all non-exempt employees.

D. The Parish shall secure Worker's Compensation Insurance for all parish employees.

ARTICLE VI - Finances and Property

A. The Parish Council shall annually recommend a budget to the governing bodies of the Parish. This budget shall include the recommendations from the PPRC in regard to salaries and other compensation for the pastor and other employees, and allowances for the shared expenses of the Parish.

B. Each church shall contribute to the Parish treasury their share of the common expenses in monthly payments, due the first of each month.

C. The congregations shall agree annually as to the portion of the Parish budget for which each will be responsible.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE BYLAWS FOR ESM CHURCH

Bylaws for Northern Light United Church

What follows are bylaws for an actual union church with denominational affiliations in both The United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The details of this document belong to the congregation itself, the circumstances of its locale, and its particular point in time. What is provided does not imply the opinions of this document's writers. It is here, with permission, for illustrative purposes only.

When designing a set of bylaws each specific instance must be considered based upon the specifics of the congregations involved, their denominational affiliations, the nature of the ESM, and the date and time of its drafting.

ARTICLE I- Name

The name of the Union Church shall be Northern Light United Church, a union of United Methodist and Presbyterian (U.S.A.), located in Juneau, Alaska.

ARTICLE II - Faith and Worship

A. Theological Assumptions:

1. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." There is one calling to which we advance, the Kingdom of God.
2. There is one body of Christ and we are made members of His body regardless of our station, race, or location. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and thus brothers and sisters to each other. In Christ we are the family of God and joint heirs of His riches.
3. God, through grace has manifested love by providing redemption for all through Jesus Christ. Such graciousness on God's part calls forth from those who accept God's gifts of reconciliation, appropriate responses of mission and ministry.

4. A critical factor of that human response has to do with our being responsible stewards of our time, of our talents and our resources.

5. We confess that our attempts to live out this mandate of responsible stewardship have been feeble and inadequate. However, in the light of our rapidly changing society, we see the need for a renewed effort to strengthen the Church of Jesus Christ.

B. Statement of Faith. The Northern Light United Methodist Church shall be guided in matters of faith by the creeds and confessions of the participating denominations, and the following statement of faith:

We believe in God, the eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to God's deeds we testify: God calls the world into being, creates people in His own image and sets before them the way of life and death.

God seeks in Holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. God judges people and nations by righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Himself.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

God calls us into The Church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship; to be God's servants in the service of people to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil; to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table; to join Him in His passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust Him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace; courage, and God's presence in trial and rejoicing; and eternal life in The Kingdom which has no end.

C. Sacraments. Baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be the two recognized sacraments. No specific form of either shall be required. However, the church shall provide for a variety of viewpoints and experience in regard to both the sacraments and its services of worship.

D. Worship. The church is a worshipping com-

munity, living an ordered life according to the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of our worship is to express our love and praise to God and to witness to His love for all people. To realize this expression for all who participate, a challenging range of worship services shall be provided.

ARTICLE III-Membership

A. All members of the Northern Light United Church shall be members of both the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). New members may be received by confession of faith or reaffirmation of faith or by letter of transfer as provided by procedures developed by the Council.

B. New members received into the Northern Light United Church by confession or reaffirmation of faith shall be asked to subscribe to the following questions:

1. In confirmation (or reaffirmation) of your baptismal vows (or vows made for you at your baptism), do you here in the presence of God and this congregation witness to your personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?
2. Do you intend to seek a deeper faith in and understanding of God? Do you intend to seek a deeper faith in and understanding of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, to trust Him, to follow Him as a faithful disciple with the aid of the Holy Spirit?
3. Will you study and seek to understand the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the unique and authoritative witness of Jesus Christ and God's Word to you?
4. Do you intend to be a faithful member of this congregation, as far as you are able, regularly attending its services of worship, observing its sacraments, upholding its unity and fellowship in love, and participating in its mission and service in the community and world?

C. The Council is charged with keeping the membership rolls of the church current (ref. Article IV-H). The Membership and Evangelism Committee, in consultation with the Stewardship and Finance Committee, shall make recommendations to the Council concern-

ing actions regarding the membership rolls. This would include contacting people and encouraging inactive members to participate in the life of the church.

D. An "Inactive Members Roll" shall be established and shall list the names of those who have been removed from the "Active Members Roll" because of their failure, in the judgment of the Council, to participate in the church's work and worship through attendance and/or known contribution. No member shall be transferred from the Active to the Inactive Roll until that member shall have failed intentionally to participate in the work and worship of the church for one year. After a period of one year of inactivity and/or until the Council shall have made diligent effort to discover the cause of the member's non-participation and to restore the member to activity in the church's work and worship, then that person shall be moved from the Active to the Inactive Roll. Any member whose name is transferred shall be notified of this action. The person shall remain on the Inactive Roll for a period of one year with the Inactive Roll being read at each Annual Meeting. If persons on the Inactive Roll do not participate within that one-year period, their name may be removed from the membership roll.

E. A non-resident member to whom the notice required above has been given may, after one year, be placed on the Inactive Members Roll. The Council shall then advise the person (at the last known address) to request a certificate of transfer to a Christian church in the community of residence.

ARTICLE IV - The Council for Local Government

A. The Northern Light United Church shall be governed by a representative body known as the "Council" by the congregation from its own membership. Election shall be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting or at special meetings to fill vacancies which may occur. The council shall have the power of a Session of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and/or the Administrative Board of the United Methodist

Church. A moderator and vice-moderator shall be elected by the Council from the lay membership of the Council by a majority vote.

B. The voting members of the Council shall consist of the ordained ministers who are members of the staff of the Northern Light United Church and twelve lay members. Lay members who have not been ordained as elders shall be so ordained in an appropriate ceremony. In addition, a youth member (non-ordained) may be elected to a one-year term and may be reelected to subsequent terms.

C. To be qualified as a member of the Council, the person must have been a member of Northern Light United Church for a year prior to being nominated or be retired clergy from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the United Methodist Church, having participated in the life of the congregation for at least one year, must be at least eighteen years of age and cannot concurrently be a member of the Committee on Property and Investments or Deacons. Council members shall be installed at a regular church service and directed to their responsibility by prayers.

D. There shall be three classes of the lay members on the Council. The length of tenure shall be three years. Terms shall run concurrently with the church's fiscal year. Reelection shall be possible only after rotation off the Council for one year. Council members who have served one year or less may succeed themselves.

E. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be a staff minister, or designated appointee, of the Northern Light United Church, a lay Moderator, Vice-Moderator or designee, and four of the lay members of the Council.

F. The corporate responsibility of the Northern Light United Church rests with the Council. The Council shall conduct the affairs of the Church as they relate to administration of business and programs. The Council shall also be the legal trustees of the church corporation. The Council may buy, sell, or mortgage property or undertake construction only with the concurrence of a majority of members at a congregational meet-

ing and the concurrence of each higher judicatory. If construction or remodeling costs less than ten percent of the value of the building being replaced or remodeled, the Council can proceed without vote of the congregation and concurrence of both higher judicatories, provided a loan is not necessary.

G. The Council shall hold at least ten meetings annually. Special meetings may be called by a staff pastor, the Moderator, or any four Council members. Interested members of the congregation will be encouraged to attend Council meetings. The Council may have executive sessions for the purpose of discussion of personnel matters, however, all decisions shall be made in an open meeting.

H. The Council shall provide for the spiritual guidance of the Northern Light United Church through education based on the Bible and provide for the sacraments. The Council shall keep current rolls of members, set standards for membership based on teachings of the Bible and provide the discipline of all members by policy as well as by tribunal.

I. The Council shall establish committees as necessary to carry out program needs of the church as determined by the Council. The Council may modify, transfer, and create additional responsibilities.

1. The committee may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Christian Education (CE);
- b. Church Family Life (CFL);
- c. Membership and Evangelism (M&E);
- d. Missions (M);
- e. Native Ministry (NM);
- f. Stewardship and Finance (S&F);
- g. Worship and Arts (W&A).

2. One Council member will serve as a member or chair of each standing committee, including the Committee on Property and Investments.

3. The membership of the committees shall be determined by the Council.

4. Each standing committee and the Committee on Property and Investments shall elect its own chair annually.

J. The Council shall annually elect two elder del-

legates to the Alaska Presbytery, one must be currently serving on Council; and two representatives to the Cooperative Church Council. Further, the Council shall ensure that lay members are elected by the congregation to the Alaska Missionary Conference (four year term). The Council shall fill vacancies as they occur.

ARTICLE V - The Deacons

A. The Deacons, consisting of nine members, shall be elected by the congregation at its annual meeting or at a special meeting as vacancies occur. They shall hold at least ten meetings annually and be chaired by a Deacon elected annually from among the current nine members.

The Deacon Chairperson shall be responsible for reporting in writing the Deacons' activities to the Church Office for the Council at least one week prior to the Council meeting. Lay persons who serve as Deacons who have not already been ordained shall be ordained. A staff pastor and a member of the Council shall be ex-officio members of the Deacons. The Council member shall be responsible for reporting Council concerns and requests to the Deacons.

B. The Deacons shall minister to those in need, to those who are sick, to the friendless, and to anyone in distress. The Deacons shall oversee administration of the Deacons' Fund, communion preparation, and other duties as assigned.

C. There shall be three classes of Deacons. The length of tenure shall be three years. Reelection shall be possible only after rotation off the Deacons for one year. Deacons who have served one year or less may succeed themselves. A Deacon may not concurrently be a member of the Council.

D. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be five Deacons.

ARTICLE VI - The Committee on Property and Investments

A. The Committee on Property and Investments (CPI) is responsible to the Council for the ongoing maintenance of buildings and grounds and as a consultative body on building renovations and management of financial investments

of the Church. The CPI, consisting of nine members, shall be elected by the congregation at its annual meeting or at a special meeting as vacancies occur. The CPI shall hold at least ten meetings annually. The Chair-person shall be responsible for reporting the Committee's activities in writing to the Church Office for the Council at least one week prior to the Council meeting. A staff pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the CPI.

B. There shall be three classes of members. The length of tenure shall be three years. Reelection shall be possible only after rotation off the CPI for one year. Members who have served one year or less may succeed themselves. A member may not concurrently be a member of the Council or Board of Deacons.

C. To be qualified as a member, the person must be a member of the Northern Light United Church. Members shall be installed at a regular church service and directed to their responsibilities by prayers.

D. The CPI shall be directly accountable to the Council.

E. The CPI shall be responsible for preparing the budget request for its areas of responsibility.

F. The CPI, under the general oversight of the Council, is responsible for all Church gifts, trusts, investments, insurance policies, corporation papers, investments and bonding. The CPI shall provide advice for the Council to act upon any changes that might be required.

G. The CPI is responsible for maintaining all property as funded and providing for yard care and snow removal.

H. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be five members.

ARTICLE VII - Staff Parish Relations Committee

A. Staff-Parish Relations Committee. A Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) shall consist of ten persons, nine of whom are elected by the congregation at its annual meeting. One of the

members shall be a young adult. In addition to the nine members elected to serve on the SPRC one of the Lay members elected to the Alaska Missionary Conference shall also be a member of the SPRC. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. There shall be three classes of lay members, one of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term.

B. The SPRC shall elect a chairperson annually from among its members. A member of the Council shall be an ex-officio member of the SPRC. The Chairperson of the SPRC shall submit a written report of meetings to the Church Office for the Council at least one week prior to the Council meeting.

C. The SPRC shall follow the outline of duties for the Committee as given in the Local Church Section of the current edition of the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. The committee shall fulfill both the role as outlined in the Book of Discipline and the role of the personnel committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D. The functions of the Committee are:

1. To confer and counsel with the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to their relationship with the congregation, including priorities to be given in the use of their time and skill in relation to the goals and objectives set for the congregation's mission and the demands of the ministry. To keep the pastor(s) and staff advised concerning conditions within the congregation as they affect relations between the pastor(s)/staff and the people.

2. To provide evaluations annually for the pastor(s) and staff to maximize their effectiveness in ministry and for identifying continuing education needs and plans. The completed evaluation(s) for staff pastor(s) shall be furnished to the pastor(s), Councils and judicatories.

3. To annually recommend to the denominational leadership not later than the first week of January the continuation or change of each staff pastor. The pastor and Council shall be apprised of the recommendation.

4. To consult on matters pertaining to pulpit supply and to ensure that the pulpit is appropri-

ately staffed each Sunday.

5. To enlist, interview, evaluate, review and recommend persons for candidacy for ordained and diaconal ministries, and persons for missionary service. To make opportunities for ordained ministry known to the congregation.

E. The SPRC shall present the budget needs for staff salaries, allowances and fringe benefits.

ARTICLE VIII - The Nominating Committee

A. A Nominating Committee shall consist of two lay members of the Council selected by the Council, and five lay members, not Council members, that shall be nominated and elected by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The staff pastors shall be ex-officio members of the Nominating Committee. The Chairperson shall be elected annually by the Nominating Committee from its lay membership.

B. The Nominating Committee shall provide at least one eligible nominee for each elective position to be filled, giving consideration to persons representative of the congregation's diverse membership. Elective positions include, but are not limited to the Council, SPRC. Property and Investments, Deacons, Pastor Nominating Committee, and representatives to the Alaska Missionary Conference. The names of the nominees shall be published at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

ARTICLE IX - Ministerial Staff

A. Pastoral Selection

1. When the congregation is seeking a pastor or an associate pastor, a Pastoral Nominating Committee shall be elected at a duly called congregational meeting and shall have nine (9) members, including two (2) from the Council and two (2) from the SPRC. No paid staff may be elected to the Committee. The Pastor Nominating Committee, in consultation with the appropriate ministerial relations agency, the Alaska Presbytery and the Alaska United Methodist Missionary Conference, shall then thoroughly investigate the personal qualifications of several candidates. This step should be taken by the Committee before approval of the judicatories is sought.

2. A candidate's call must be approved by the United Methodist Bishop and the Presbytery before the name is presented to the congregation.

3. The name of one candidate for each pastoral office shall be presented at a congregational meeting duly called for the purpose of electing a pastor and/or an associate pastor. A two-thirds majority of those present is required to elect.

4. Installation and dismissal of a staff pastor shall involve not only the congregation but also the judicatories of the two denominations.

5. A contract shall be executed between the Church and the pastor delineating conditions of employment including job description, salary and benefits, performance, and conditions for termination. This contract shall be prepared by the Pastoral Nominating Committee and approved by the Council, following consultation with the SPRC.

B. Pastoral Responsibilities shall be determined by the Council and reviewed annually.

C. Pastor change:

1. A change in appointment may be initiated by the pastor, the SPRC, or by either judicatory.

2. In the event a change is initiated by the Pastor, the pastor is requested to give three months' notice to the SPRC and the Council prior to vacating the pulpit.

3. If the SPRC recommends a change in pastoral leadership, the committee shall meet with the Council and pastor in Executive Session to discuss the recommendation prior to forwarding the recommendation to the judicatories. The Council shall then submit its recommendation, either concurring or disagreeing, to the judicatories.

4. If either judicatory wishes to initiate a change in pastoral leadership, the judicatory shall notify the Council, the SPRC, the pastor and the other judicatory prior to a final decision.

ARTICLE X - The Northern Light United Church

A. This Church shall be a union church of the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) incorporated under the laws of the State of Alaska.

B. In all of its actions, the Council of the Northern Light United Church is subject to examination by and is accountable to the respective judicatories of each denomination.

C. All members of the Church shall be under the discipline of the Council according to the rules agreed upon in harmony with the governing articles of the two denominations when they coincide and in harmony with the mandatory provisions of the governing articles of any one denomination where the other is permissive and at the choice of the Council where they may be contradictory.

D. Appeals or complaints against the action of the Council of the Church shall be made to only one judicatory at the choice of the member or members, and all subsequent appeals and complaints shall be in the courts of the member's original choice, and decisions so finally made shall be binding on the Council and on the members.

E. Complaints against the administrative acts of the Council may be taken under the Constitutional provisions of either denomination, but not to more than one, according to the choice of the Complainant, and once being complained to one judicatory, the other judicatory shall not accept jurisdiction in the same matter.

F. Wherever the governing articles of the two denominations differ, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the other is permissive. Whenever there are conflicting mandatory provisions (except as provided in Section C above), the Council shall petition both judicatories of immediate jurisdiction to overture their respective highest courts to resolve the conflict either by authoritative interpretation or by constitutional amendment.

G. The staff pastors of the Church shall, to the extent permitted and in accordance with the Rules of Order of each judicatory, be full and responsible members of the judicatory of immediate jurisdiction.

H. The Council of the Northern Light United Church shall report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory of jurisdiction,

and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each denomination involved with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union church, and with an indication of the total actual membership. A similar report of Church School members, baptisms, etc., and the financial expenditures, shall be made by the Council and noted by each denomination involved in its minutes.

I. The staff pastors shall participate in the pension plan of one of the denominations. If he or she is already participating in one plan, he or she shall remain in that plan. If he or she is not a member of any, he or she shall choose between them.

J. The staff pastors of the Northern Light United Church shall be full and responsible members of each judicatory or judicatories of immediate jurisdiction and shall be subject to discipline provided as follows: When one shall begin an action it shall invite a committee from the others to join the commissioner, prosecutor, or prosecuting committee in formulating and pressing charges. In the event of appeal, the case shall be finally decided by the highest court to which the appeal is taken in the judicatory which commenced the action and that decision shall be equally binding on the judicatories of jurisdiction.

K. The basic right of any giver to designate the causes to which his own gift is going shall be honored and the gift so credited. The Council shall annually propose to the congregation a general mission or benevolence program, response to the officially approved causes of each denomination. The proportions shall be as the Council shall decide in response to the requests of the higher judicatories. The mandatory apportionments or per capita obligations of the two denominations will be honored. One half of all benevolent giving will be designated for the support of each of the related denominations of which Northern Light United Church is a union.

ARTICLE XI - Congregational Meetings, Committee Meetings and General Rules of Order

A. Congregational Meetings

1. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month of April or May.

At this meeting all reports of ministerial staff, Council and organizations and committees will be made in writing. Election of officers will also be held. The Council shall determine the date and time of the annual meeting at its regular session in January.

2. The Moderator or his/her appointee from the Council shall chair all congregational meetings except the annual meeting at which the denominational official, the United Methodist District Superintendent or designee, or an official designated by the Presbytery, shall preside.

3. Special meetings may be called by the Council or by a petition to the Council signed by not less than ten percent of the members of the Northern Light United Church. The Council shall call petitioned meetings within three weeks of the receipt of petition. The membership shall be notified by letters not less than one week in advance of meetings, and public notice of the meetings shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays next preceding the meetings.

4. At Special meetings only those items may be brought up that were designated in the call for the meeting.

5. All members of the Northern Light United Church are entitled to vote at a congregational meeting.

6. A quorum shall consist of ten percent of the members of the Northern Light United Church.

7. Nominations for elective offices may be presented from the floor, subject to the consent of the nominee.

B. General Rules of Order:

1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be parliamentary authority for all matters not specifically covered by these bylaws.

2. An agenda will be adopted at the beginning of each meeting.

3. The ex-officio members of all groups shall be non-voting members.

4. An elected member of the Council, Deacons, SPRC or Nominating Committee who has three unexcused absences in any year may be considered eligible for resignation. The Chair shall rule on absences.

ARTICLE XII - The Future of the Church

A. The Northern Light United Church may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of two congregational meetings held not less than two months apart and not more than one year apart, subject to the concurrence of the immediate judicatories.

B. If it seems wise to dissolve the relationship or one of the denominations wishes to withdraw, this shall be done in the following manner:

1. A consultation among the Council and responsible officers or committees of participating denominations must arrive at an equitable plan involving property.

2. Such a plan must be approved by the congregation and the judicatories involved.

3. The actual dissolution should take place at a meeting of the congregation with representatives of both denominations in a worship service.

C. In the event of dissolution, all property shall be equitably divided between the two denominations, subject to the approval of the higher judicatories.

ARTICLE XIII - Fiscal Year

A. The church fiscal and program year will run from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.

B. Required church financial reports may be assembled quarterly in order to accommodate any reporting requirements of fiscal or calendar year to the respective judicatories.

ARTICLE XIV - Amendments

A. Amendments to these Bylaws may be initiated by a petition signed by at least ten percent of the Church members or by the Council, by a two-thirds vote of the Council membership.

B. A printed distribution of the proposed changes to these Bylaws shall be made to each church member not less than ten days prior to the duly called meeting of the congregation.

C. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting and shall become effective with the approval of each judicatory.

Revised - March, 1986

Amended January, 1993; May 22, 1995; September 24, 1995; May 15, 1997

Appendix E

DENOMINATIONAL GUIDELINES

Authority Residing Within Denominations

	American Baptist Churches	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	The United Methodist Church	United Church of Christ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Current Policies and Positions of the General Church	Policy Resolutions, Valley Forge Headquarters.	The Book of Order. Minutes and Resolutions of the General Assembly.	The Book of Discipline. The Book of Resolutions.	Minutes of the General Synod.	Synodical Bishop or Secretary.	Office of General Min. & Pres.
National Meetings	Biannual (every 2 years); non-binding on local congregations.	General Assembly (every year); some decisions in shared authority with Presbytery.	General Conference (every 4 years); binding on local congregation National Boards and Agencies non-binding on local congregations.	General Synod (every 2 years); speaks to but not for the local churches.	Churchwide Assembly (biannual).	General Assembly (biannual).
Regional Structure	Region (every year). Board of Managers meets 3-4 times a year.	Synod and Presbytery (minimum of 2 meetings a year; most presbyteries meet 4-8 times a year).	Annual Conference (every year).	Conference (every year); speaks to but not for the local churches.	Synodical.	Regions (annual & biannual).
Authority for Ordination	Local Church.	Presbytery.	Annual Conference.	Association.	Synod and Bishop in accordance with churchwide standards.	Regions.

Pastoral Salary & Housing

	American Baptist Churches	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	The United Methodist Church	United Church of Christ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Who sets the salary?	Each local church.	The congregation with Presbytery approval.	The charge conference upon recommendation of the pastor-parish committee.	Each local church.	Each local congregation.	Each local congregation.
Is there a minimum?	Each region sets a minimum.	For pastors serving churches, the minimum standards are set by the Presbytery.	An annual conference may establish a minimum salary/compensation package.	No, but each conference usually recommends guidelines.	No, but each Synod recommends guidelines.	No.
Must a parsonage be provided?	No, but an appropriate housing allowance is suggested.	Either church-owned housing or a housing allowance is usually provided.	No, but an appropriate housing allowance must be established.	No, but a parsonage or housing allowance is strongly recommended.	Either a parsonage or housing allowance.	Either church-owned parsonage or a housing allowance is usually provided.
Are there guidelines?	Recommends compliance with IRS guidelines.	Some Presbyteries may have guidelines. For the purpose of determining benefits and dues, the value of the manse is considered to be 30% of the pastor's salary.	Most annual conferences have established parsonage and housing allowance guidelines. Contact the district superintendent for more information.	Yes. Established by each conference.	Parsonage allowance is 30% of member's cash salary.	No.

Health Benefits

	American Baptist Churches	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	The United Methodist Church	United Church of Christ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
What kind?	Three: (1) a traditional indemnity medical/dental plan; (2) a preferred provider managed care plan with opt-out ability; (3) Medicare supplement.	Benefits Plan Major Medical Provisions. In some presbyteries, the plan member may choose an HMO, if offered by the Board.	Each annual conference may establish its own health benefits plan. Some conferences are self-insured; others are insured. Contact the annual conference benefits officer for more information.	Self-insured, traditional medical and dental plans; managed mental health and chemical dependency program; supplemental plans offered to retirees.	(1) Point of Service for non-retired members in Aetna network areas, (2) indemnity for non-retired members located outside Aetna network areas, (3) Medicare supplement.	Preferred Provider managed care plan, supplementary plans for retirees of Medicare.
Contributions?		Employer pays dues.	Depends on the decision re: plan.	Employer pays based on member's defined compensation (same as pension).	Employer pays based on member's defined compensation (same as pension).	Employer pays premium.
Billing?	Billed monthly at level determined by area and claims experience.	Board of Pensions.	Annual conferences do their own billing.	Member's employer is billed on quarterly basis (billing includes charges for all plans in which member participates).	Member's employer is billed monthly.	Pension Fund.
Plan Administrator?	CIGNA.	Board of Pensions. If the HMO is chosen where available, the HMO administrators.	Depends on where the annual conference is insured.	The Pension Board of the United Church of Christ. Claims administrator is Health Plan Services, PO Box 3600, Youngstown, OH 44513-3600	Aetna for Point of Service, Board of Pensions for all other.	The Plan Administrator.

Disability Programs

	American Baptist Churches	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	The United Methodist Church	United Church of Christ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
What kind?	Standard plan begins 4th month of disability; includes children's allowance, premium waiver, and annual review of benefit.	Disability is part of the benefits plan.	The basic, denominational plan is self-insured and is combined with a death benefit and pension supplement program.	An insurance plan (see #11) providing for long term disability income benefits and a contribution toward the pension account, after 90 days of total disability.	Disability is part of the pension and benefits program. Benefits begin with the third month of disability.	Disability benefits are part of the pension plan.
Contributions?	1.5% of reported compensation.	Part of the pension dues.	4.4% of actual plan compensation or the denominational average compensation, whichever is less, for all benefits under the denominational plan.	Contribution of 1% of salary basis for coverage of life insurance as well as disability benefits.	Contribution of 2.2% of defined compensation.	Part of pension dues.
Billing?	Billed monthly to employer.	Board of Pensions.	An annual conference may choose to have the pension plan contribution apportioned or billed direct to the local church.	Member's employer is billed on quarterly basis (billing includes charges for all plans in which member participates).	Member's employer is billed on a monthly basis (billing includes amount deducted for Pension, Medical, Dental, Disability, Survivor & Admin. fee).	Employer remits dues to pension fund.
Plan Administrator?	The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board 475 Riverside Drive 17th Floor New York, NY 10115 1-212-870-3036	Board of Pensions 1027 Arch Street Philadelphia, PA 19107 1-800-773-7752	The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits 1201 Davis Street Evanston, IL 60201 1-800-851-2201	The Pension Board of the United Church of Christ 475 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10115-1126 1-800-642-6543	Board of Pensions ELCA 800 Marquette Ave. Suite 1050 Minneapolis, MN 55402-2885 1-800-352-2876	Pension Fund of The Christian Church. 130 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 45204 1-317-634-4504

Life Insurance or Death Benefits

	American Baptist Churches	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	The United Methodist Church	United Church of Christ	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
What kind?	Term life and declines based on age of member. Benefits based on reported compensation.	Basic are the death benefits of the benefits plan. There are optional benefits that may be purchased by the employer or employee. See terms of plan for specific information.	The basic, denominational plan is self-insured and is combined with a disability and pension supplement program.	Two insured life insurance plans. One offers term life insurance benefits based on age; the second offers term life insurance benefits based on salary and age. The second plan also offers disability income benefits for the member and a small life insurance coverage for spouse. Both have paid-up life policy on member upon retirement.	Lump sum and monthly income.	Death benefits are part of pension plan. Optional accident insurance may be purchased separately.
Contributions?	1% of reported compensation.	Part of the pension dues, except for optional benefit.	4.4% of actual plan compensation or the denominational average compensation, whichever is less, for all benefits under the denominational plan.	The contribution for the first plan is \$50 per year. The contribution for the second plan is 1% of salary basis.	0.8% of defined compensation.	Part of the pension dues.
Billing?	Billed monthly to employer.	Board of Pensions.	An annual conference may choose to have the pension plan contribution apportioned or billed directly to the local church.	Member's employer is billed on quarterly basis (billing includes charges for all plans in which member participates).	Member's employer is billed monthly.	Pension Fund.
Plan Administrator?	The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board 475 Riverside Drive, 17th floor New York, NY 10115 212-870-3036	Board of Pensions 1027 Arch Street Philadelphia, PA 19107 1-800-773-7752	The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits 1201 Davis Street Evanston, IL 60201 1-800-851-2201	The Pension Board of the United Church of Christ 475 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10115-1126 1-800-642-6543	ELCA Board of Pensions 800 Marquette Ave., #1050 Minneapolis, MN 55436 1-800-352-2876	Pension Fund of the Christian Church 130 East Washington Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 1-317-634-4504