



Upper Susquehanna Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

These Articles of Agreement will govern the cooperative parish agreement between Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milton, PA and Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milton, PA, congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.

1. Name

- The parish will be known as the Milton Lutheran Parish (Parish) and will include Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milton, PA (Trinity) and Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milton, PA (Christ), congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement will be to:

- be guided by the Holy Spirit and discern God's mission for each congregation and the Parish,
- share pastoral ministry,
- share ministry opportunities,
- share resources,
- proclaim the Gospel to all,
- open up opportunities for renewed energy for ministry.

3. Guidelines

As the Parish, we will:

- Follow God's will (scripture) and listen to the Holy Spirit,
- Be open to change, be flexible,
- Be respectful of one another,
- Pray for one another,
- Share our resources for the good of the Parish,
- Support one another.

4. Administration and Management

- The ministry of the Parish shall be administered by a Milton Lutheran Parish Council (Parish Council), which consists of 3 members of each congregation to be determined by each congregational council. At least 2 of the 3 members shall be a congregational council member. Each member of the Parish Council will have a term of 3 years, and can serve 2 consecutive terms, with a minimum of 1 year off after the second consecutive term has been served. Filling an unexpired term constitutes the first term of the 2 consecutive terms. Thus, whomever fills an unexpired term one shall serve no more than 1 full term and 1 partial term consecutively.

- The Pastor(s) of the Parish shall be (a) voting member(s) of the Parish Council.
- The President of the Parish Council shall be elected by the Parish Council on an annual basis with the presidency rotating annually between the two congregations.
- The Vice President of the Parish Council shall be elected by the Parish Council on an annual basis with the Vice Presidency rotating annually between the two congregations such that the Vice President and the President shall not be members of the same congregation.
- The Secretary of the Parish Council shall be elected by the Parish Council on an annual basis with the position rotating annually between the two congregations.
- The Treasurer of the Parish Council shall be appointed by the Parish Council. The Treasurer may serve 2 consecutive 3 year terms. The Treasurer is not required to be a Parish Council member, but shall regularly report to the Parish Council.
- In the event of a pastoral resignation, each Congregational Council shall appoint a call committee consisting of 3 people from each congregation. No more than 1 person from each congregation may be serving on the Congregational Council while on the call committee.
- The Parish Council shall meet at least quarterly and will address the business of the Parish.
- The Parish Council shall endeavor to work cooperatively for the sake of the mission of the Church and the efficient utilization of the pastor's time.

5. Authority

- The purpose of the Parish Council is to develop mission and overall ministry plans and make recommendations to the respective Congregational Councils.
- Each congregation shall maintain authority for decisions regarding their individual congregations.
- The Parish council has authority to set the compensation and benefits package for the pastor.

6. Entry

- A majority vote of the members of each congregation present and voting at congregational meetings, called in accordance with congregational constitutions, shall be required to adopt these Articles of Agreement.

7. Time

- Upon ratification by each congregation, these Articles of Agreement shall begin no more than 2 months after ratification.

8. Pastoral Responsibilities

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- Every ordained pastor shall:
 - a. Preach the word;
 - b. administer sacraments;
 - c. conduct public worship;
 - d. provide pastoral care; and
 - e. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- Each ordained minister of the Parish with a congregational call shall within the congregation:

- a. offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - b. supervise all schools and organizations of these congregations;
 - c. install regularly elected members of the Congregational Councils, the Parish Council; and
 - d. with the Congregational Councils, administer discipline
- The Parish pastor(s) shall:
 - a. strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;
 - b. seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - c. impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and publications; and
 - d. endeavor to increase support given by the congregations to the work of the churchwide organization of the ELCA and of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the ELCA.

The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

9. Call Process

- The call of a pastor shall be under the guidance of the Bishop's Office. An overall two-thirds majority vote with at least a majority in each congregation shall be necessary for approval of the pastoral candidate. If the call is approved, the congregations authorize the Milton Lutheran Parish Council to issue the call.

10. Mutual Ministry Committee

- There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee consisting of 6 members, equally represented by both congregations. The pastor will select 2 members and each Congregational Council will select 2 members. The Mutual Ministry committee shall assist the pastor and the congregations in reviewing the ministry goals for the Parish and the respective congregations.

11. Shared Expenses

- Shared expenses will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - The total compensation package (salary, social security allowance, housing allowance/parsonage, benefits, and professional expenses) for the pastor.
 - Certain shared programmatic expenses, as agreed upon by the Parish Council.
- Shared expenses (as described above) are to be divided 50-50% between both congregations. The formula will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. The intention of this formula is to share the expenses fairly.

12. Pastor's Compensation

- The Upper Susquehanna Synod's Compensation and Benefits Guidelines should be consulted.
- The Pastor's Housing allowance will be calculated based on the Upper Susquehanna Synod's Compensation Guidelines.

13. Finances

- There shall be a Parish treasury out of which the Parish Treasurer shall be responsible for the payment of all shared expenses (as defined in Section 11 - Shared Expenses). An annual review will be conducted by an Audit Committee made up of an equal number of representatives from each congregation but will have at least 1 representative from each congregation. The results of the review will be shared with the Parish Council and both congregations. An audit will be performed within 6 months of a change of the Parish Treasurer. If the change is within the term, the Parish Council will determine the need for an audit.

14. Special Meetings

- Special meetings of the Milton Lutheran Parish Council may be called by the pastor or Milton Lutheran Parish Council president in consultation with the individual council presidents and the pastor.

15. Review and Changes

- The participating Congregational Councils agree to a regular review of this agreement annually in consultation with the pastor(s), the councils of the participating congregations and the office of the Bishop.
- Changes or modifications of these Articles of Agreement may be made by a two-thirds vote of members of each congregation present and voting at congregational meetings, called in accordance with the Congregational Constitutions. All proposals for changes shall be recommended by the Parish Council to each Congregational Council for a congregational vote.

16. Terms of Dissolution/Termination

- After consultation with the Office of the Bishop, termination of this agreement by a congregation shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Congregation present and voting at the Congregational meeting. At least a three months' notice will be given of a congregation's intention to withdraw from the Parish. Any vote to dissolve the Parish and/or terminate a Congregation's participation in the parish shall require approval by the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council.

17. Specific Arrangements/Other

- Worship Times: Sundays 8:30AM – Trinity, 10:30AM– Christ; Wednesdays 4:00PM - Christ
- Special liturgy times and locations: – Christmas Eve – 7:00 PM Christ; 10:30PM – Trinity; Christmas Day – 10:00AM Christ; Midweek Lenten Services – Alternate between the congregations each year; Easter – 8:30AM Trinity; 10:30AM Christ.
- The Parish Council shall meet to discuss and make decisions regarding matters affecting the life of the participating congregations and may include, but not be limited to: reporting to Congregations, preparing a Parish budget, scheduling worship times, coordinating Sunday school programs, cooperative/shared ministries programs such as confirmation, youth programs, VBS, Lenten and Christmas services, and Mutual Ministry Committee. Decisions shall require a majority vote.
- In consultation with the Mutual Ministry committee, the Parish Council shall address any and all concerns brought to it by the pastor(s) and/or the Congregational Councils.

- The place of residence of the Pastor shall be negotiated with the Parish Council and the Pastor as part of the call process.
- The Pastor at her/his discretion shall divide his/her time between/among the congregations for the successful enhancement of ministry of the Parish.
- The Pastor will meet the pastoral needs of the people in each congregation as they occur.

This agreement shall be signed and dated by the individual congregation council presidents, the pastor, and the bishop after such time as each congregation enters into the agreement.

Council President
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Council President
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Bishop
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA