



Northwest Washington Synod

Personnel Committee

Mutual Ministry Team Guidelines

Introduction:

The following guidelines are being provided to encourage congregations and councils to support the establishment of Mutual Ministry teams for their Ministry Leaders. The term Ministry Leaders is used as an all-encompassing term for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministers of Word and Service, Mission Developers and Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers. The Synod Council also is encouraged to design and implement mutual ministry teams for the Bishop and Synod's Rostered Staff.

The Churchwide ELCA Model Constitution section C13.04 recognizes the establishment of a Mutual Ministry Committee (Team).

C13.04: Mutual Ministry Committee(s) shall be appointed jointly by the president [vice president 3] and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

In embracing mutual ministry, a ministry site understands that ministry is a partnership between the site and leaders, acknowledging that the site's ministry is the responsibility of both the members of the ministry site and Ministry Leaders.

It needs to be recognized that the role of ministry can often be lonely and leaders become easy targets for criticism from others. Therefore, it is recommended that Councils encourage their leaders to establish a Mutual Ministry Team (MMT). A minister's MMT serves to provide support and care to Ministry Leaders. The term "team" is used in place of "committee" to reinforce that ministry it is a team effort.

The MMT should not be viewed as a Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee has an entirely different function. Each MMT is to serve as a source of support and sounding board for the Ministry Leader (Bishop, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministers of Word and Service, Mission Developers and Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers).

Ministry sites with more than one Ministry Leader are encouraged to form a separate MMT for each staff member. In some instances, a ministry site and Lead Minister may elect to have one team serve all staff.

The Functions of a Mutual Ministry Team:

1. Foster and facilitate communication and cooperation between ministry leaders and their ministry site.
 - a. Through constructive and honest listening, interpreting, advising, conferring, evaluating, recommending, affirming, and forgiving, the partnership of the ministry leader and the ministry site are both strengthened.

2. Assist in the setting of personal goals and provide support in achieving them, as well as evaluate how they tie to the ministry site's established mission, vision, and goals.
3. Evaluate, advise, and recommend actions and programs that are deemed appropriate to the ministry site's mission, vision, and established goals. Recommendations may be referred to the ministry site Council as needed or requested.
4. Serve as a confidential "listening post" for the Ministry Leader. This may include in times of personal or professional stress.
 - a. LISTEN in an open and receptive manner to those in the ministry site and the ministry leader.
 - b. Be an honest, confidential voice to the ministry leader regarding all aspects of operations and issues that are part of the ministry site.
 - c. Watch for and address early warnings of misunderstanding and miscommunication.
5. As needed, facilitate conflict resolution that may affect the shared ministry, and/or the ministry leader's standing within the ministry site.
6. Extend concern and support for the spiritual, emotional, and self-care needs of the ministry leader.
7. Identify continuing education that would assist the ministry leader and/or the goals of the ministry site.
8. When appropriate, assist in the development of a sabbatical plan for the ministry leader. Forward to the ministry site Council for final approval, as necessary.

Guidelines for a Mutual Ministry Team:

1. The MMT is limited to a set number of members (recommended 4 members). The ministry leader invites/recruits half the MMT members and the Council President invites/recruits the other half. This allows for variability in the MMT membership.
2. The MMT members shall be appointed jointly as described above. They are not elected by the Council or members of the ministry site.
3. Term of office shall be for two years, with half the members being appointed each successive year.
4. MMT members' terms may be renewable for a second year.
5. MMT members agree to maintain a strict confidentiality of all information shared while serving on the MMT.
6. Each MMT and ministry leader can determine their frequency for meetings. However, it's recommended that they meet at least quarterly.
7. MMT members will hold no other elected office in the congregation during their term.
8. MMT members should be spiritually mature people who have preferably had some sort of faith formational training/experience.
9. MMT members should not be part of the Personnel Committee.
10. The MMT does not provide annual reviews.

In summary, the role of the MMT is to support the Ministry Leader as they reflect on and shape their ministries in order to facilitate and further the ministry site's goals by providing a caring, confidential sounding board, source of reflection, ideas, counsel through honest feedback and dialogue about perceptions and concerns within the ministry site.