

Faith & Grace Parish Agreement

I. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to create a geographical parish between the following congregations: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Golden, IL; Salem Lutheran Church, Mendon, IL; Zion Lutheran Church, Liberty, IL. The purpose is to maintain God's presence in each of the communities we serve. This geographical parish will enable cooperating congregations and pastor(s) to share strengths and benefits through shared ministry opportunities, resources, programming and cost/purchase savings.

II. Ministry Identity

The name by which the ministry is to be known shall be: Faith & Grace Parish. Faith & Grace Parish shall have a council hereafter know as Faith & Grace Parish Council.

III. Mission Statement

The mission of Faith & Grace Parish is to gather in God's name, share ideas and concerns and actively shape the future of spiritual growth for our member congregations. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and through ordained and lay leadership we offer this ministry to serve Christ, our communities, and the world.

IV. Pastoral Calls

Any pastor called or contracted to serve the Faith & Grace Parish shall be called or contracted according to ELCA constitutions and policies. There will be one call committee consisting of two representatives from each of the congregations. The call committee will, by a simple majority vote, recommend one nominee to all three Congregation Councils. All three Congregation Councils will recommend this nominee to their respective congregations before there are any congregational call votes. A letter of call to serve as a pastor or rostered layperson of the congregations of Faith & Grace Parish shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at each participating congregation's meeting, to be held on the same date at each congregation. One congregation will be the calling agent and fiduciary administrator for the duration of the call; beginning with Immanuel Lutheran Church of Golden, each congregation will serve as the calling agent on a rotational basis, to be determined by the Faith & Grace Parish Council.

V. Worship

- A. The order of worship in each congregation will be determined by the congregational council in consultation with the pastor.
- B. The scheduling of regular service and church holiday services will be divided equitably between member churches on a rotational basis decided by the Faith & Grace Parish Council and clergy.
- C. Scheduling of occasional special worship services shall be determined by the Faith & Grace Parish Council and clergy.

VI. Financial Obligations

- A. The Faith & Grace Parish expenses will be divided with Immanuel paying fifty percent, Salem paying twenty five percent, and Zion paying twenty five percent. The budget will be reviewed and revised annually or more often as needed by the Faith & Grace Parish Council.
- B. Parish expenses shall include, but not be limited to: Faith & Grace Parish salaries, benefits, auto expense, housing expenses, and parish miscellaneous expenses.

- C. Each congregation shall deposit two months of their monthly estimated portion of parish expenses as startup money into the agreed parish account as specified in section X,D,1. Thereafter, each congregation will pay into the parish account their portion of the actual monthly expenses of the parish on or before the tenth day of the next month.
- D. Individual congregations will be responsible for their own church building and grounds. This includes but is not limited to maintenance, refurbishing, and insurance.

VII. Congregational Identity

Each congregation will maintain its own identity. Each congregation will be accountable to the Central/Southern Illinois Synod for representation at Synod events and for the expenses of such representation at those events.

VIII. Staffing

The Faith & Grace Parish Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the non-rostered staff of the Parish, while at the same time respecting the oversight responsibilities the pastor has in the congregations. Faith & Grace Parish supports and encourages development of lay leadership. The lay leadership development and support must also be done in concert with pastoral leadership.

IX. Parish Relationship

The Faith & Grace Parish exists and cooperates in the spirit of mutual love and goodwill that each congregation has for the others. The commitment to the parish grows out of the abiding love of Christ and knowledge that we must work together to be successful as we are reminded by Jesus in Matthew 12:25. Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." It is this vision that binds us together.

- A. Each congregation maintains its own property, programs, and personnel that are not jointly shared.
- B. The congregations of the Faith & Grace Parish covenant together to seek ways to do ministry together for a minimum of twelve months, always endeavoring to come closer together, while supporting and promoting the integrity and viability of each congregation.
- C. To withdraw from this parish agreement, a congregation shall vote to do so at a legally called meeting by two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the congregation's withdrawal from the parish takes effect twelve months after the vote to withdraw.
- D. In the event that any congregation decides to discontinue participation in the Faith & Grace Parish, the parish relationship will continue for the remaining congregations.
- E. Property owned by each congregation prior to the establishment of Faith & Grace Parish shall remain the property of said congregation. Property and/or equipment acquired by Faith & Grace Parish after formation shall be considered Faith & Grace Parish property. Property and equipment purchased by individual congregations' remains with that congregation.
- F. If a congregation leaves Faith & Grace Parish, ownership of Faith & Grace Parish property remains with the Faith & Grace Parish.
- G. If the Faith & Grace Parish dissolves, all undisposed property owned by the Faith & Grace Parish shall pass to the Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

X. Administration

A. Congregation Councils

Each congregation will elect and retain its own leadership, including congregation council and officers, according to the constitution and by-laws of the congregation.

Congregational Council Meetings will be held as determined by the congregation.

B. Faith & Grace Parish Council

The Faith & Grace Parish Council will consist of two persons from each participating congregation and the clergy of the Faith & Grace Parish, with each person having one vote.

The Faith & Grace Parish Council will meet at least quarterly or more often as needed. Special meetings may be called by the president, clergy, or a representative of the Faith & Grace Parish Council.

A quorum at Faith & Grace Parish Council meetings will consist of at least one representative from each of the participating congregations. The Faith & Grace Parish Council will elect the officers of the council annually. The council officers will be president and secretary. The treasurer will be appointed by the Faith & Grace Parish Council and is not required to be a council member.

The president will provide the agenda and preside over the meetings. The secretary will take minutes and make printed copies available to Faith & Grace Parish Council members and each Parish congregation.

C. Duties

The duties of the Faith & Grace Parish Council shall include the following:

1. Be responsible for the employment and supervision of the non-rostered staff of this shared ministry. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the Parish responsibility or the congregations' responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination for call of any employees who are on a roster of the ELCA.
2. Determine housing provisions for rostered staff.
3. Develop an annual Faith & Grace Parish budget, including salary for Pastor(s), for approval by individual congregations.
4. To establish Parish task forces or committees as needed for the benefit of Faith & Grace Parish.
5. To be responsible for making recommendations of amendments or changes to Faith & Grace Parish agreement to the each of the participating congregations.

D. Duties of the Parish Treasurer

1. The Parish accounts will be at a depository agreed upon by the Faith & Grace Parish Council.
 - a) The signature requirements for all checks and EFT (electronic funds transfer) authorizations issued from the parish account will be determined by the Faith & Grace Parish Council.
 - b) The treasurer will generate a report of parish receipts and expenses on a monthly basis and provide it to the Faith & Grace Parish Council president and each Parish congregation in print.
2. An audit of the financial records shall be done the first week of each January or as soon thereafter as is convenient for all involved.
3. The audit committee shall be composed of a representative from each of the congregations within the Faith & Grace Parish.

XI. Amendments

Amendments to the Faith & Grace Parish Agreement shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at each participating congregations' meeting.

XII. Future Cooperation

This group of congregations is open to future cooperative ministry with other neighboring congregations. There is openness for additional pastoral and lay staff. There is a willingness to discuss and seek mutual agreement for the benefit of other congregations, as well as our own ministry.

XIII. Liability and Indemnification

- A. A board or committee member, officer, employee, or member of the parish is not liable for the parish debts or obligations. A board or committee member, officer, employee, member, or other volunteer is not personally liable in that capacity for a claim based upon an act of omission of the person performed in the discharge of the person's duties, except for a breach of the duty of loyalty to the parish, for acts or omissions not in good faith, or which involve intentional misconduct or knowing violation of the law, or for a transaction from which the person derives an improper personal benefit.
- B. The parish agrees to indemnify and hold harmless any board or committee member, officer, employee, or member of the parish acting on behalf of the shared ministry, in regard to any action against said individual by a third party, except as stated in the previous paragraph.

XIV. Signatures

This operating agreement has been approved and is adopted by the following congregations on this _____ day of _____, 2017 as indicated by the signatures of the congregations' presidents listed below:

_____ Church; _____, Congregation President

_____ Church; _____, Congregation President

_____ Church; _____, Congregation President