

RESOURCES

Congregational Mutual Ministry Committee: A Handbook

The primary resource for supporting our church leaders is the Mutual Ministry Committee. This handbook provides guidance on establishing this Committee in the congregation or employing agency. The manual describes how to set up a committee, what the committee does, and suggests ways in which staff and congregation can develop mutual ministry. (Copies are available from the synod office.)

Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work

The relationship between the pastor and the people is integral to a congregation's life and ministry. This timely resource offers key insights on tending to various aspects of this relationship, including reflections on the ministry of clergy and laity, the role of a pastor, ministry review, performance evaluation, and much more. Suitable for pastors, congregational leaders and councils, call committees, and anyone involved in church ministry. (Available from Augsburg Fortress Publishers)

PLACE: **P**rofessional **L**eaders' **A**id for **C**ontinuing **E**ducation

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BACKGROUND

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has set high standards for its professional leaders. A fundamental requirement for these leaders is a thorough grounding in the Holy Scriptures and Christian faith, coupled with an understanding of the world in which ministry takes place. In addition, church leaders are aware of the need to continually grow in competence and understanding in order to be faithful in discipleship. Continuing education is the way the leader enhances ministry abilities already employed, acquires new skills, and experiences personal growth for a more effective ministry.

An adequate program of continuing education for rostered church leaders may be short or long term, credit or noncredit. Whatever the format, it should be planned to fit the individual's goals for ministry and meet the objectives of the congregation/agency which he/she serves. In the ELCA, continuing education is conceived as a joint effort of leaders and the whole church.

A MUTUAL COMMITMENT

The lifelong learning process begins when the individual, the employing congregation/agency, and the synod covenant together regarding continuing education. The core of this covenant looks at the areas in which the professional leader wants to grow in order to serve the church better. The leader and the employer agree on such details as the time to be made available, the amount of funds to be set aside, and how those funds are to be administered.



A MUTUAL COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

The PLACE procedure suggests a minimum contribution of \$550 per year for each congregation/agency and a minimum of \$250 from the professional leader. The contributions may be made monthly, quarterly, or annually. This schedule is to be specified in the Letter of Call. Funds committed to PLACE, if not used within a given calendar year, are to accumulate for use by the leader in subsequent year(s).

Procedures for the deposit and withdrawal of funds being held in escrow for this purpose will be agreed upon and stated in the official records of the employer. Normally funds are held in trust by the congregation/agency for the leader, but in some ELCA synods, a common synodical depository has been established. Check with your synod office for details on setting up an account in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.



USE OF PLACE FUNDS

Funds accumulated under the PLACE program may be expended for tuition, required resources, travel, room and board, and all like expenses which are described in the Continuing Education Covenant. PLACE funds may also be used for programs in which participation of the spouse would be helpful or required.

A MUTUAL COMMITMENT OF TIME



According to the PLACE procedure, the employer agrees to provide two weeks (up to twelve working days) each calendar year for professional leaders to use for continuing education. The leader agrees to arrange his/her schedule in order to participate in the agreed upon program.

If continuing education events include Sundays, the employer and professional leader should negotiate the way appropriate help or services will be provided.

The two week time period allotted for continuing education need not be used in one time block. However, time is not cumulative from year to year unless provisions to this effect have been made in the Letter of Call. Some leaders (and employers) may opt for an arrangement of a longer block of time once every three to five years for extended study/sabbatical instead of a yearly opportunity for continuing education.

EVALUATION

Since the leader, the congregation/agency, and synod are all involved in identifying continuing education programs, these same parties share in the evaluation process. The evaluation identifies the specific ways in which the mission goals will be helped and the specific ways in which the rostered leader has grown or increased his/her skills. If synod goals were incorporated into the plan, this also should be reviewed.



TERMINATION OF SERVICE

If the professional leader terminates service, all contributions which have accumulated continue at his/her disposal for use in continuing education programs arranged in conjunction with another ELCA related agency. The funds are to be transferred to the new employer, if they are not being held by the synod. If the leader terminates his/her service with the ELCA, only the individual's past contributions are to be transferred to the new employer.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The leader and congregation/agency will review the PLACE Agreement annually. If major changes are indicated in the details of the commitment, a new agreement should be written.