

Prairie Wind Evangelical Lutheran Parish
Formula of Agreement

Revisions: 11/14/07, 12/1/08, 7/27/09, 2/1/2010, 11/3/2011

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Formula of Agreement is to authorize a relationship between the following congregations: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Abilene, Kansas; Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Junction City, Kansas; **Scherer Memorial Lutheran Church, Chapman, Kansas; and Marion Hill Lutheran Church, White City, Kansas.**

II. Ministry Identity

The name by which the ministry is to be known shall be Prairie Wind Evangelical Lutheran Parish, hereafter referred to as “the Parish.”

III. Mission Statement

We have benefited greatly from the gifts of God’s love, peace and joy through Jesus. In grateful response, we seek to share these same gifts with others, inviting all people seeking meaning, purpose and community to a new life in Christ.

IV. Statement of Purpose

The churches represented in this cooperative effort are united in the goal of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the people. We are united in the goal of seeing that each congregation maintains its own identity, integrity, and traditions of the past.

We respect and recognize the God-given gifts and talents that each person in each congregation has. We are united in the sharing of the witness to Christ that each member can contribute in their God-given talents. By sharing ministry, we become more open to the Word by experiencing new ideas, new ways, and new insights brought in by different ministry leaders, both ordained and lay. Our main objective is to work together in a cooperative manner to continue to share the Good News and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Upholding and inspiring the faith of people of all ages is our task in this mission of faith, not only for the present, but for generations to come.

V. Rationale

Our rationale is to improve the ministry to the people of each congregation by attracting a staff with complementary talents, which will better fulfill the needs of all members of the participating congregations. This will stimulate spiritual growth, commitment, and participation. This will continue the presence of each church in our communities through pooling our talents and financial resources.

VI. Congregational Identity

Each congregation will maintain its own identity and will be accountable to the Central States Synod for representation at Synod events. The records of the individual congregations shall be and remain the property of each congregation. Each congregation may continue its own program of Christian Education (Sunday school, confirmation, adult education, etc), groups such as Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, and youth groups, and community outreach and service. At the same time, it is understood that the congregations are free to work together programmatically wherever that best serves the ministry of the involved congregations.

VII. Staffing

- A. To best meet the current needs of the ministry, there will be a ministry leadership staff of at least one ordained Pastor and other ministry support staff as needed.
- B. Any lay staff hired to serve in the ministry of the Parish shall be approved by the Parish Council in consultation with the ordained Pastor.
- C. Ministry Staff will have regular meetings (as needed) to determine how to best cover the ministry leadership needs and demands of the participating congregations. There will be a ministry staff person at each individual Congregation Council meeting and at each Parish Council meeting.

VIII. Worship

- A. Each congregation will conduct its own Sunday worship service on a weekly basis, with the option to schedule joint services set up by the ministry staff in consultation with each congregation and the Parish Council.
- B. Scheduling of occasional ministry worship services such as Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas Eve/Day, Lent, and Easter will be set up by the ministry staff in consultation with each congregation and the Parish Council.

IX. Parish Council

- A. The Prairie Wind Evangelical Lutheran Parish Council shall consist of ~~seven~~ **thirteen** people, to include the Pastor, the President or Vice President of each Congregational Council, one other council member from each congregation and one member at-large from each congregation. Each individual Congregational Council will elect two members to serve on the Parish Council, each for a one-year term. Except for the Council Presidents, elected members are limited to a maximum of three consecutive terms. Terms will run according to the calendar year (January 1 - December 31). The congregation council may also elect an alternate to be able to serve in the absence of their respective parish council member. Should a member's place on the parish council be declared vacant, the congregational council holding the vacancy shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until Dec 31 of the current year.
- B. The Parish Council shall have oversight for all things related to the sharing of ministry among the participating congregations and shall make all decisions impacting the partnership of the participating congregations. Duties shall include:
 - 1) Identifying leadership needs and the sharing of the ministry leadership in an equitable way.
 - 2) Periodically reviewing the ministry expectations with the Pastor.
 - 3) Recommending an annual compensation package for Parish ministry staff, for presentation to the respective Congregational Councils.
- C. Decisions impacting the individual congregations, but not the partnership, shall be made in the individual Congregation Councils.
- D. The Parish Council will meet on no less than a quarterly basis.

- E. Parish Officers: There shall be four officers, elected by the members of the Parish Council. These officers shall be president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. **No church will have more than two members serving as Parish Officers.** Officers shall serve for a one-year term and may be re-elected. The Parish president shall preside at meeting of the Parish Council. The vice-president shall preside at meetings in the absence of the president. The secretary shall keep and distribute the minutes of the meetings. The treasurer shall have custody of the funds in the unified central account and shall receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decision of the Parish Council and shall maintain records of all contributions and disbursements related to the unified central account.
- F. The minutes and financial records shall be made available to the Congregation Councils and members of all participating congregations.

X. Financial Obligations

- A. Expenses for all shared ministry items, including all staff compensation items, ministry costs such as mileage, rent and office expenses for the central office (which will be at Trinity Lutheran), shared supplies, etc. shall be paid out of the unified central account.
- B. Each congregation shall pay into a unified central account for shared ministry expenses. The percentage of this shared expense paid by each congregation will be determined annually by calculating the average Sunday worship attendance of each congregation **for the previous calendar year**, divided by the combined average Sunday worship attendance.
- C. Individual congregational facility and operational expenses will remain the responsibility of each congregation.
- D. The sharing of financial expenses will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. Any changes made will be made with the approval of the individual Congregation Councils.

XI. Adding additional congregations/ministries to the partnership

Other congregations or ministries interested in becoming a part of the Prairie Wind Evangelical Lutheran Parish will be welcomed to join the ministry upon approval of the Parish Council and the Central States Synod **and approval by a vote by all of the congregations involved.**

XII. Approval, Review, and Evaluation

This Parish began on May 1, 2006. This document will be reviewed and evaluated on a yearly basis. Any future changes in this document will need to be approved by the Parish Council, with input from the individual Congregation Councils (and from the Central States Synod when necessary), and then approved by each of the congregations at duly called congregational meetings.

XIII. Length of Agreement

If for any reason, an individual congregation feels that it is necessary to end its participation in the partnership, a six-month notification must be given before withdrawing from the partnership.

Certification of Approval

The signatures below certify that this Formula of Agreement was approved by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and Faith Evangelical Lutheran.

Andy Hess, President, Trinity Lutheran

Date: _____ 10/26/2009 _____

Garry Berges, President, Faith Lutheran

Date: _____ 10/26/2009 _____

President, Marion Hill Lutheran

Date: _____

President, Scherer Lutheran

Date: _____

Revised 2/1/2010

Brad Youngmark, President, Trinity Lutheran

Garry Berges, President, Faith Lutheran

Revised 11/3/11

Brian Harris, President, Trinity Lutheran

Garry Berges, President, Faith Lutheran