

THE HEALING WATERS PARISH AGREEMENT

Approved by all congregations on September 16, 2012. Effective October 1, 2012

NAME

The name 'Healing Waters Parish' was chosen because each congregation is in Yellow Medicine County. Medicine is used for healing, and we desire to invite and encourage people to join our healing parish. The Native American name for Yellow Medicine describes the Blue Gentian flower, which needs lots of moisture. It is believed that this flower was used for its healing powers and grew by flowing waters. Christ calls us to be healed, restored, and nourished in the waters of baptism, and to invite and encourage all people to gather in faith and be sent to serve.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to authorize a parish relationship between the following congregations: Augustana of Clarkfield; Bergen of Stony Run Township; St. Lucas of Normania Township; Swede Home of Swede Prairie Township; Yellow Medicine of Hanley Falls.

LONG MISSION STATEMENT

God calls us to mission and ministry in our rural prairie communities and to the world. Gathered in faith and nurtured by Word and Sacrament, we commit ourselves to share a hope for the future, to use our resources and talents guided by the Holy Spirit, and to work together to expand our ministry to serve others in the name of Jesus Christ.

SHORT MISSION STATEMENT

Gathered In Faith — Sent to Serve

PASTOR

Any pastor and/or rostered leader called to serve the ministry shall be on the active clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or approved by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, be approved by the Healing Waters Parish Council, and be called by at least a two-thirds majority of members voting at each congregation.

WORSHIP

- 1) Each congregation will retain its own order of worship and identity.
- 2) Each congregation will have one service per Sunday or as determined by each congregation.
- 3) Scheduling ministry worship services for holidays, Lent, etc. will be done by the Healing Waters Parish Council in consultation with each church council.
- 4) Each congregation shall use its own offering envelopes.
- 5) Envelope offerings at All-Parish worship services will be returned to the members' congregations. Unless designated by the Parish Council for a special ministry, loose offerings shall remain with the hosting congregation.

SHARED PROGRAMMING

- 1) We encourage individual congregations to continue their ongoing ministries, such as WELCA, Altar Guilds, work groups, and other special groups or events.
- 2) If agreed upon by the individual congregations, the Healing Waters Parish encourages the following to be shared among the congregations:
 - a) Youth programs, which could include confirmation and Vacation Bible School;
 - b) Ministry to the elderly— shut-ins and people living in assisted living and nursing home facilities;
 - c) Hospital and crisis visitations.
- 3) Each congregation will continue to have its own church council, janitor and secretary.

PARISH COUNCIL

- 1) Each congregation will maintain its own identity as it now exists, and will be accountable to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod for representation at Synod events and for the expenses of such representation at those functions. Each congregation will stay within their own conference— either Prairie or LacQuiParle.
- 2) The governing body of the Parish shall be called the Parish Council and shall be made up of two members from each congregation— one of whom must be on his/her respective congregational council.
- 3) The members shall be elected for two-year terms. Congregation representatives shall be elected at their congregation's annual meeting. Congregation council representatives shall be elected by their council. Members shall be limited to two consecutive terms unless otherwise approved by the Parish Council. An outgoing council member can be off the board council for one year and then be elected again to the council. Terms on Parish Council are February 1 to January 31, regardless of the date of a congregation's annual meeting.
- 4) The Parish Council shall meet at least quarterly at times and dates as established by the officers of the council with meeting locations rotated among the churches of Healing Waters Parish.
- 5) Officers (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer; secretary and treasurer may be the same individual) will be elected at the first meeting following the last congregational annual meeting.
- 6) Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- 7) The President or any two members of the Parish Council may call a special meeting upon a one-week notice.
- 8) A quorum shall be at least 50% of the Parish Council.
- 9) Each Parish Council member present at the meeting has one vote.
- 10) Two-thirds majority of those present is needed on all votes.
- 11) Ex-officio members of the Parish Council will be the pastoral staff and parish staff with non-voting rights.
- 12) All council meetings are open to any member of the congregations.
- 13) Each church council can appoint alternates to attend meetings in the event one or both of their elected members are not able to attend.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- 1) To support the pastor(s) and staff in carrying out the mission of the Parish.
- 2) To identify leadership needs of the parish and the sharing of the pastor(s)' and staff's time in an equitable way and to encourage good communications between the staff and the congregations, such as All-Council Gatherings and a Mutual Ministry Committee.
- 3) To establish the parish call committee in the event of a pastoral vacancy— to consist of one member of each congregation council, one member from the congregation, and a youth member from each congregation.
- 4) To annually review and update congregations' membership to update total number of confirmed contributing members.
- 5) To draw up, monitor, and administer the parish budget and all joint expenses.
- 6) To annually negotiate pastoral and support staff salaries and reimbursements.
- 7) To employ other staff as the Parish Council deems appropriate.
- 8) To actively participate in the worship and congregational life of the Parish.
- 9) To make arrangements for an annual audit of the books for the Parish. A qualified person who is not a member of the Parish Council shall conduct this audit.

OFFICERS

Officers shall consist of the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer (or secretary-treasurer) with one-year terms. The officers shall be members of the Parish Council and be elected by the Council. The officers will be the Executive Committee, which also will serve as the Parish Personnel Committee. Officers' terms will continue until the Parish Council elects new officers.

Responsibilities will include:

- 1) Annually review the terms of the Letters of Call and the ministry expectations of Healing Waters Parish.
- 2) Perform annual reviews of pastor(s) and other Parish employees.

FINANCES

- 1) Each congregation will pay a minimum worship compensation fee plus a percentage share of the balance of the shared expenses based on the following formula:
 - a) Each congregation will have a base contribution which is the cost for one worship service for an ordained clergy based on the current Synod Pulpit Supply Guideline fee multiplied by 52 weeks.
 - b) Percentage Share is determined by taking the total joint parish shared expenses minus the total worship compensation fees for all the congregations multiplied by the percentage of confirmed contributing members in each congregation. This will be reviewed and updated in October of each year, as part of the next year's budgeting process.
- 2) Each congregation will make equal monthly payments according to the above formula to the Healing Waters Parish general fund.

CALL COMMITTEE

- 1) The Parish Council shall initiate the parish review and call process.
- 2) The Call Committee shall consist of three members from each congregation— one member of the church council, one non-council member, and one youth if possible.
- 3) Both the Parish Council and the Call Committee will coordinate with the Synod Office during the call process.
- 4) The Call Committee shall first recommend the candidate(s) and the proposed compensation, working within the guidelines of the budget, to the Parish Council. The Parish Council must approve the Letter(s) of Call before a vote is taken by the congregations.
- 5) All congregations will vote at special congregational meetings on the same day. Exceptions to this policy may be considered by the Parish Council, or by the Executive Committee in an emergency. The outcome of each congregation's vote will be given to the Parish Council President.
- 6) The Letter(s) of Call must be approved by at least 2/3-majority vote at each congregation, and be approved by all congregations within Healing Waters Parish.

PARSONAGES

- 1) Parsonages not used by parish staff may be rented out, as determined by the congregation that owns it. Rent income will be retained by the congregation, and the congregation will have responsibility for real estate taxes, repairs, maintenance, utilities if unrented, and other expenses for their parsonage.
- 2) The parish budget shall include an amount determined by the Parish Council to be adequate to cover regular repairs for parsonages used by parish staff. A parsonage reserve fund of \$6000 will be kept in accessible savings, to be used for additional parsonage repairs, if needed. Any reserve funds used will be replaced from the general fund as funds are available. The Parish Council must approve any repairs totaling over \$500 for parsonages used by parish staff. Bills

will be presented to the treasurer of the Parish Council for payment.

- 3) For parsonages used by parish staff, members of that church council are responsible for yearly inspections of each their parsonage to determine any repairs that might be needed.
- 4) Parish funds are to be used for utilities and repairing and maintaining parsonages used by parish staff. The cost of any upgrades to parsonages will be at the discretion of and paid by the congregation that owns the parsonage.
- 5) Pets will be allowed in parsonages only with the approval of that church's council. A Security Deposit will be required of pastors or renters, as outlined in Synod Guidelines.
- 6) Synod guidelines will be followed regarding the parsonages.

TERMS OF THE PARISH AGREEMENT

- 1) The Parish Agreement will be reviewed at least every five years by the Parish Council. It can be altered only by mutual agreement of all the participating congregations.
- 2) The Parish Council shall review the "confirmed contributing membership" for the previous year, minus any confirmed contributing members who transfer out or pass away by Sept 30 of the current year, to determine the budget percentage of contributions by each congregation for the coming year's Parish budget. The Parish budget will be approved by the Parish Council, after congregational representatives and their councils have opportunity to review, suggest changes, and support the budget proposal.
- 3) If a congregation desires to terminate its participation and withdraw from the parish at any time, it must consult with the Southwestern Minnesota Synod staff, and notify the Parish Council at least six months in advance. During this six-month period it is understood that the congregation will remain part of this Agreement and meet all financial obligations.
- 4) Additional congregations may join Healing Waters Parish upon a majority vote by all current participating congregations, and will agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.
- 5) A congregation must approve joining or withdrawing from the parish by a 2/3-majority vote cast by written ballot at a congregational meeting.
- 6) Because of the possible financial ramifications of a congregation withdrawing from participating in this Agreement, the configuration of the staff may need to be revised. If a new revised budget needs to be made and the congregation apportionments exceed the current year's budget, each participating congregation must approve the amended budget by a majority vote at a special congregational meeting.
- 7) If it becomes necessary to dissolve the Healing Waters Parish, the Parish Council and each participating congregation must agree by a 2/3-majority vote. The effective date will be six months following such vote. Should the Parish dissolve, all undisbursed funds will be redistributed on the same basis as the final year's contributions were made.
- 8) Amendments to the Healing Waters Parish Agreement must be passed by a 2/3-majority vote of each congregation.
- 9) Except where noted, all other parish business submitted to the congregations for approval must pass by a majority vote.
- 10) The Healing Waters Parish Council cannot supercede any constitutional powers of any congregation in this Agreement.

ADOPTION

This Parish Agreement shall be effective _____ when approved by each congregation as witnessed by the signatures below:

Congregation

Church Council President

Date of Approval
