

## **Collaborative Ministry Covenant of Church of the Ascension, Lexington Park and St. Georges Church, Valley Lee**

### **Preamble**

We, Church of the Ascension, Patuxent Parish and St. Georges Church, William and Mary Parish, with the support of the Diocese of Washington, DC, do hereby commit to collaborate in sharing our resources, including but not limited to clergy, administrative staff, lay persons, and volunteers to more effectively meet the needs of our parishes, our parishioners, and the larger communities of which we are a part. After years of research, reflection, discussion, and mutual support, representatives of each of our parishes have joined to propose the following means for sustenance, growth, and development of our separate parishes and our shared mission in Christ.

Together, as we envision a sharing future, we can build a collaborative relationship that allows each parish not only to meet its current needs but to grow in service, outreach, and membership through a ministry of shared resources and deeper ties between our two parish families. We envision neither the merger of the two parishes nor the creation of a third entity to govern or oversee the affairs of the separate churches. Representatives from our individual vestries, working together, will in effect be the linked arms of our separate church bodies lending strength to one another in leading this joint venture.

The need to try new approaches has also underscored for us the need to craft this covenant with a light hand so as to preserve the utmost flexibility in the arrangements we propose.

## **Mission**

To provide for a collaborative ministry with the sharing of liturgical resources, support staff, and activities as the parishes may from time to time identify to further the health and vitality of each parish in accomplishing our mission in Christ.

## **Commitment**

Each parish by its assent to this Covenant agrees to continue its participation for a minimum of three years and to give at least one-year notice to the other to terminate or substantially alter the terms of the relationship.

Each parish shall contribute to a collaborative ministry budget in proportion to the respective service received. This budget addresses the cost of the clergy's total compensation package as well as other costs associated with the administration and operation of the liturgical mission to be divided proportionally.

## **Joint Executive Committee**

*Responsibilities:* Joint Executive Committee shall identify mutual needs, opportunities, and challenges of collaborating and will develop a plan to accomplish this sharing. They shall also budget for, receive, administer, and account to both parish vestries for the funds needed for the support of collaborative ministries salaries, programs, and other shared expenses. With the consent of the two parish vestries, the Rector is responsible to the Joint Executive Committee, who shall oversee his work and coordinate as needed with each parish vestry. The Joint Executive Committee shall also consider and from time to time recommend such changes to this covenant as is deemed to be in the best interest of the parishes and the continued vitality of the covenant. The group shall address and respond to such concerns as may from time to time be raised with it by the independent vestries or parish members.

*Membership and Attendance:* Representatives from our individual vestries, working together, will in effect be the linked arms of both separate church bodies lending strength to one another and overseeing all areas of collaboration. Two representatives (the senior warden and one other) from each parish vestry and the Rector shall comprise a committee to address matters related to collaboration. The two members shall be designated by each vestry to serve a two-year term to represent the will of their respective vestries. Ideally and to foster wider participation, no member should serve more than one consecutive term.

*Officers:* The two parish senior wardens shall be responsible for jointly calling and presiding at meetings of the Joint Executive Committee, communicating with members and coordinating with the Rector. The presiders shall, at the initial and subsequent meetings (and with the advice and counsel of the Rector as needed), designate which of them shall bear the principal responsibility for carrying out particular tasks. Joint Executive Committee representatives shall designate one of its members to serve as clerk and may request the two parish treasurers to attend meetings to provide input on financial matters related to collaboration.

*Meetings:* Joint Executive Committee meetings shall take place at least quarterly to set and oversee the collaborative ministry budget, to agree on programs, and to review the progress under the Covenant. As may be deemed necessary, the chairpersons and the Rector may also call other meetings as needed.

*Decisions:* The majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for Joint Vestry meeting decisions. The group shall endeavor to make decisions through consensus, but may reach decisions through majority vote except where such decisions may expressly require input and/or approval of both parish vestries.

## **Collaborative Ministry Model**

*Rector:* The Rector shall be selected and appointed by the two parish vestries and shall be a full-time employee responsible to the two separate vestries through their Joint Vestry Representatives. The Rector will bear primary responsibility for

coordinating additional clergy, administrative staffs and resources to meet liturgical and other customary needs of each parish.

*Worship Services:* It is the present intention to maintain two Sunday services at each parish with one full-time rector and additional clergy/lay staff as determined by the vestries. It is important that clergy have a meaningful presence in both parishes each Sunday thereby ensuring that no parish feels less supported or less important. Clergy should have a rotating schedule with time available after each service in order to interact with parishioners for community and relationship building.

*Clergy Coverage on Holy Days:* Holy Days which fall on week days will be observed through joint services with locations and times to be determined. Easter and Christmas services will be held in each parish at times to be determined.

*Rector Coverage during the week:* The Rector shall spend administrative and pastoral care time during the week at both parishes with a goal of equal sharing of time and services. The Rector should have maximum flexibility to manage this time according to the needs of each parish in any given week.

## **Amendments**

This document may be amended by the vote of no less than two thirds of the vestry members of both parishes. Any proposed amendment must be made available to the general membership within each parish at least one month before any such vote.

Members of the Collaborative Ministries Covenant Committee

Eric Delk (Church of the Ascension)

Mary Larson (St. Georges)

Tom McCarthy (Church of the Ascension)

Mike Mead (St. Georges)

Mary Ann Murray (St. Georges)

Karol Wolgemuth (Church of the Ascension)