

Shared Ministry Notebook

Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee

*Shared
Ministry
notebook*

Launched
Feb. 2005

Revised
Sept. 2005



Partners in Ministry

Episcopal
Diocese
of East
Tennessee

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*These materials owe much to previous work by several dioceses, including Northern Michigan and Northern California.

I. OVERVIEW

Ordained, Commissioned, Licensed Ministries

By virtue of our baptism, we are all Christian ministers. The Holy Spirit authorizes and empowers every baptized person to carry on various ministries for the good of and on behalf of the congregation.* For some Christians, this means being called to ordained ministries. But for most of us, this means we become actively involved in lay ministries. Title III, Canon 1:1 of the Episcopal Church Canons states:

Each Diocese shall make provision for the affirmation and development of the ministry of all baptized persons, including:

- (a) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve Christ's mission at all times and in all places.
- (b) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation.

The life and work of *ordained ministers* – deacons, priests, and bishops – is described in Title III of the Church Canons.

Commissioned ministries is the term we use in the Diocese of East Tennessee for ministries represented within a congregation's ministry support team (outreach ministry coordinator, education coordinator, etc.) as described in the pages of this notebook.

The Church also provides opportunities for certain *licensed ministries*. "A confirmed communicant in good standing . . . may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons, and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry" (Title III, Canon 4, Sec.1(a)). Additional information about licensed ministries can be found in the companion *Licensed Ministries Notebook*.

* *Entering the Household of God: Taking Baptism Seriously in a Post-Christian Society*. Claudia A. Dickson, Church Publishing, 2002, p. 83.



II. THE GIFTS AMONG US

A Concept Paper on Shared Ministry in the Diocese of East Tennessee

Introduction

Shared Ministry is the name we use in the Diocese of East Tennessee for an understanding of ministry that is also referred to as “Total Ministry,” “Mutual Ministry,” “Baptismal Ministry,” or “Collaborative Ministry,” among others. All of these terms mean the same thing: enhancing the vitality in today’s parish communities through commitment to the belief that the ministry of the church is a shared ministry. Emphasizing and empowering the ministry of all the baptized leads congregations to an elevated sense of ownership of their mission and promotes the renewal and revitalization of congregational life. Our diocese’s Shared Ministry Formation Committee – along with the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry, the diocesan Office of Ministry Development and others – are all resources to congregations interested in exploring shared ministry.

A. Theological Basis for Shared Ministry

Shared ministry is based on a specific understanding of God, the sacraments of baptism and eucharist, and the church: All people are created in the image of God and are called into a relationship with God. All people are called to serve God and God’s people; all are called to be ministers working to achieve the purposes of God. All people are provided with unique gifts and talents through the power of the Holy Spirit – gifts and talents given not for the benefit of one group of people over another, nor for the personal advancement or glory of the person receiving those gifts, but for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Shared ministry especially recognizes and respects the contributions and the ministries of all the people of God (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 855). Some are called and gifted to serve within the church as ordained ministers (deacons, priests, and bishops). Others are called and gifted to serve both through the church and through their individual vocations and professions. In shared ministry, there is no hierarchy of giftedness or vocation. Those who are able are called to serve, regardless of status. Those who have knowledge are called to teach, regardless of position in the community. Thus, at its heart,





shared ministry is an egalitarian approach that seeks to promote a community that is a discipleship of equals, responding to Jesus' comment that he no longer calls us servants, but friends. Shared ministry puts itself in opposition to clericalism, which is an excessive devotion to and support for the power and interests of the clergy.

With shared ministry, the sheep share in the shepherding under the headship of the ultimate shepherd, Jesus Christ. The offices of the church have been given to the church to order and support the work of God, and in particular to equip the saints for ministry. Therefore, the work of deacons, priests, and bishops is in no small part to be the work of empowering and enabling the ministries of all the people of God. Vestries, too, share in this essential work.

The late Bishop Wes Frensdorff, describing the vision of what the church should be in a shared ministry approach, suggested that it is to be a gathering of ministers, both lay and ordained, who are committed to the mission of God, and not a community of lay people gathered around one (ordained) minister. With shared ministry, the church exists not so much for the benefit of its members but for the sake of transforming the world.

In shared ministry the people of God are called forth to serve, and the gathered community celebrates and expresses this calling forth, this vocation, through the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is the outward sign of initiation into the ministering community. Baptism also is the marking of an individual's call and of the Holy Spirit's provision of gifts that empower and support each person in ministry. Through baptism (as well as in their various ministries), the people of God themselves become symbols of God's kingdom breaking into their everyday lives. All ministry flows from and is authorized by the one baptism shared by Christians.

Ordained ministry, then, is not over and above other forms of ministry but flows from this fundamental priesthood of all believing people just as the lay ministries do.

The eucharist also is an important sacrament in shared ministry communities, both the sign of unity as Christians and the source of strength for ministry. In the eucharist Christians are reminded of the example of the self-giving ministry of the High Priest. From this example, Christians strive to pattern their lives as ministers in His name.

Shared ministry sees the church as the Body of Christ in the world – a body of ministers, laity and clergy, who seek to bring all people and all creation into unity with

God through Christ. Shared ministry embodies mutuality in relationships as well as sharing of power, leadership, and decision-making. It reflects the optimism, enthusiasm, and focus on mission of the early church. The shared ministry approach involves all of the people of God in ministry, calling them to work together and to use all the aspects of their lives to accomplish the work of God.

B. Policy

The Diocese of East Tennessee will strive to assist each parish that feels the call to emphasize shared ministry development built on a ministry support team approach. The function of the ministry support team, with the clergy, is to energize, engage, and support the ministry of all of the baptized. The team reports to the rector and vestry.

Shared ministry is appropriate for congregations of any size in any setting:

- ◆ In parishes able to support a full-time (stipendiary) priest, the goal of shared ministry is to maximize the role of the priest as coordinator and enabler of active ministry for the whole congregation and to minimize the role of the priest as primary provider of ministry.

- ◆ In parishes unable to support a full-time priest, shared ministry will be especially beneficial in providing sustained ministries in that congregation's everyday life. Several congregations may decide to explore shared ministry in common, with a view to establishing a cluster ministry, where a priest would serve as having oversight responsibilities among parishes within the cluster.

C. Steps Toward Shared Ministry Development

These steps are explained in more detail in Appendix One to this notebook.

1. Vestry and clergy inform bishop of intent to explore shared ministry.

- ◆ Bishop's representative meets with vestry if requested.

2. Bishop assigns diocesan facilitator to work with congregation.

- ◆ Diocesan facilitator works with vestry and rector to plan forums and agendas for parish's shared ministry exploration.

3. Parish holds meetings to explore vision of shared ministry.

- ◆ Congregation contrasts present approach to ministry to that





of more emphasis on shared ministry.

- ♦ Parish may re-examine mission.

4. Congregation determines individual gifts and talents.

- ♦ Individual gifts are matched to congregation's needs.

5. Congregation and rector select ministry support team.

- ♦ Congregation determines to proceed with shared ministry.
- ♦ Congregation nominates ministry support team members.
- ♦ Rector and vestry select ministry support team members and notify the bishop and the Shared Ministry Formation Committee.

6. Ministry support team members agree to two years of training and formation.

- ♦ Ministry support team meets regularly to work and study together.
- ♦ Ministry support team members participate in occasional workshops and retreats.

7. Ministry support team periodically communicates with Shared Ministry Formation Committee about its development.

- ♦ Shared Ministry Formation Committee meets from time to time with ministry support team members.

8. Ministry support team is commissioned.

- ♦ Shared Ministry Formation Committee assesses ministry support team.
- ♦ Ministry support team commissioned at a liturgy where the ministry of all the baptized is affirmed.

The ministry support team should be committed to ongoing ministry formation. Following commissioning, the ministry support team should continue to build skills, gain knowledge, increase understanding, develop spiritually, and support one another in the exercise of their shared ministry. The Diocese of East Tennessee recommends the utilization of the *LifeCycles* program available through LeaderResources <www.leaderresources.org>.

For additional information on shared ministry in the Diocese of East Tennessee, contact any of the Shared Ministry Formation Committee members, listed in Appendix Two on page 21 of this notebook.

Suggested Reading:

Letting Go ... Transforming Congregations for Ministry. Roy D. Phillips, Alban Institute, 1999.

I Have Called You Friends.... Kevin L. Thew Forrester, Church Publishing, 2003.

A Theology of Worship (Volume 12 in the new Church's Teaching Series). Louis Weil, Cowley Publications, 2001.

Ministry In Daily Life. William Diehl, Alban Institute, 1999.

Entering the Household of God: Taking Baptism Seriously in a Post-Christian Society. Claudia A. Dickson, Church Publishing, 2002.

Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts. Lloyd Edwards, Cowley Publications, 1988.

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III. MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM CONSIDERATIONS

One way of selecting a ministry support team would be to look for members who possess the potential to develop these important characteristics:

- ◆ Team members are clear about their authority and its limitations; for example, they report to the rector and the vestry.

- ◆ Team members understand themselves to be a group (vs. as individuals) of ministers within a congregation – a group with a specific focus: to assist in nurturing and developing the ministries of all baptized members of the congregation.

- ◆ Team members understand group dynamics.

- ◆ Team members have a solid focus on evangelism.

- ◆ Team members are able to articulate their specific call to ministry.

- ◆ Team members are committed to ongoing participation in ministry formation (via *LifeCycles*, diocesan workshops, etc.).

- ◆ Team members have a basic familiarity with Holy Scripture and Anglican tradition (creeds, doctrine, church history, catechism, baptismal covenant, *BCP*, Hymnal, etc.).

- ◆ Team members work together with mutual support and prayer, respect and fluid boundaries (inclusivity, teamwork, understanding of group dynamics).

- ◆ Team members understand the context of the parish, community, and diocese (the systems of which the group is a part).



IV. WHO MAKES UP A MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM?

The function of the ministry support team (with the clergy) is to energize, engage, affirm, and support the ministry of all the baptized. The ministry support team reports to the member of the clergy who exercises oversight of the congregation and to the vestry.

Each congregation, depending upon its gifts, needs, and mission, will determine which ministries should be represented on the ministry support team. While no service for Christ is insignificant, not every ministry within the congregation needs to be represented.

Listed below are some suggestions for consideration.* A parish may determine to use additional ministries as well. To maximize effectiveness, the ministry support team should, ideally, consist of five to 10 members.

Catechist**

Deacon

Ecumenical Coordinator

Education Coordinator

Member at Large

Music Ministry Coordinator

Outreach Ministry Coordinator

Parish Administrator**

Pastoral Care Coordinator**

Preacher**

Priest

Worship Leader**

Youth Ministry Coordinator

*Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor also certainly could be part of a ministry support team.

**These canonical licensed ministries are discussed in detail in the companion *Licensed Ministries Notebook*.



V. MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

Catechist: Prepares people for membership in the church.

Deacon: Helps to alert members to issues of peace and justice, and to local, national, and international social concerns and responsibilities.

Ecumenical Coordinator: Keeps in touch with representatives of other denominations and religious groups in the local community. Identifies local and regional opportunities for cooperative Christian action in support of common mission. Encourages and coordinates participation in these activities.

Education Coordinator: Develops, schedules, and monitors congregation's educational activities. Assists in individual and congregational discovery and affirmation of those who have gifts for education ministry.

Member at Large: Assists clergy and ministry support team in their efforts to discover, energize, engage, affirm and support the ministry of all the baptized.

Music Ministries Coordinator: Assists in selecting hymns and other music; looks for appropriate ways to incorporate alternative music and dance; helps plan special services and events; encourages cooperation among all involved in music, including organist and choir director.

Outreach Ministry Coordinator: Identifies needs for serving ministry in the community and beyond. Assists in individual and congregational discovery and affirmation of those who have gifts for outreach ministry. Schedules those providing serving ministry among members and in the community.

Parish Administrator: Exercises administrative responsibility in the congregation in compliance with diocesan and Episcopal Church canons.

Pastoral Care Coordinator: Identifies and responds to needs for pastoral care among members and in the local community. Helps those gifted for caring ministry to be discovered and affirmed by the congregation and themselves.

Preacher: Focuses the congregation's attention on God's loving initiative in history through proclamation of the Word. Explores and sheds light on the relationship of scripture to current-day experience.

Priest: Responsible for the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish. Presides at worship and administers sacraments. Directs the planning and rehearsal of worship. Nurtures the





ministry support team and shares in discovering, affirming, and engaging the ministry of all the baptized.

Worship Leader: Shares in planning and rehearsal of liturgy and in planning the worship calendar. Leads public worship, subject to direction of the Book of Common Prayer.

Youth Ministry Coordinator: Assists children/youth in growth to Christian responsibility. Shares in coordination of education and training of these people. Helps those gifted for youth ministry to be discovered and affirmed by the congregation and themselves.

VI. CORE COURSES FOR SHARED MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAMS

In addition to participating in the *LifeCycles* program, all ministry support team members will be offered these core courses*:

From Membership to Ministry – All baptized Christians are called to be active participants in the church’s ministry. The focus of this course is to explore how the church is to be about the task of ministry in the world.

Canons and Episcopal Polity – This course will present an overview of the Constitution and Canons for the polity of the Episcopal Church USA and the Diocese of East Tennessee. Specific canons pertinent to particular licensed ministries will be offered in breakout sessions.

Racism Awareness – The purpose, scope and focus of the diocesan program on anti-racism is to help bring about an awareness of racism in its many subtle and pervasive forms. This program seeks to inform, teach and train people to recognize and realize that racism is a sin and cannot and must not be tolerated in a world that professes the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention (Safeguarding God’s Children and Sexual Boundaries) – This course will focus on issues of child sexual abuse prevention and sexual harassment. The unique dimensions and boundaries of pastoral relationships and sexual exploitation will be presented.

* Individual track courses will be offered to those ministry support team members seeking specific canonical licensed ministries as described in the companion *Licensed Ministries Notebook*.



APPENDIX ONE

A Closer Look at the Steps toward Shared Ministry Development

1. Once a congregation, together with its clergy, decides to explore shared ministry, the vestry and clergy will notify the Bishop of its intent. The Bishop or the Bishop's representative may meet with the vestry to discuss this possibility.

2. If the local leadership desires to proceed, the Bishop will designate a diocesan facilitator to work with the congregation as it explores the understanding of shared ministry. Shared ministry will be presented to the congregation with members of the vestry and the diocesan facilitator participating.

3. If the consensus is to proceed, the congregation and clergy, with the assistance of the diocesan facilitator, will explore the biblical basis for shared ministry and its relevance in today's world. The congregation will contrast the understanding in which members of the congregation see themselves as recipients of spiritual care from clergy with the apostolic vision of shared ministry of all the baptized.

4. The congregation will prayerfully discern and affirm their members' individual gifts and the potential to expand its mission through shared ministry. Any method of gifts discernment may be used with the goal of identifying and valuing the gifts of every member. The goal is to match needs and gifts that reflect a congregational consensus.

5. If the congregation finds shared ministry to be feasible and they wish to proceed, the congregation or its vestry will nominate members to a ministry support team.

The team's ultimate role, with the clergy, will be to nurture and develop the ministry of all baptized members of the congregation. The selection of team members must be affirmed by the clergy and the vestry, who will notify the Bishop and the Shared Ministry Formation Committee.

6. The ministry support team covenants to work and study together in preparation and spiritual formation through regular meetings for a period of two years. The Diocese of East Tennessee recommends using the *LifeCycles* program. Additionally, diocesan-sponsored core courses and individual track courses will be offered.

7. The ministry support team will write Ember Week letters as a group to the Shared Ministry Formation Committee informing them of the team's progress in prepara-





tion and formation. Ministry support team members will maintain individual portfolios and will meet once a year with representatives of the Shared Ministry Formation Committee. A mentor may be assigned to those ministry support team members seeking a canonical licensed ministry.

8. Upon completion of the curriculum, the members of the ministry support team are assessed together as a team by the Shared Ministry Formation Committee. With all necessary approvals of the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry, the ministry support team is commissioned at a liturgy during which the ministry of all the baptized is affirmed. Those who will serve on the team are duly commissioned (or licensed, as appropriate). As the team continues to fulfill these commitments, it will report regularly to the member of the clergy who oversees the congregation and to the vestry.

9. The ministry support team should be committed to ongoing ministry formation. Following commissioning, the ministry support team should continue to build skills, gain knowledge, increase understanding, develop spiritually, and support one another in the exercise of their shared ministry.

APPENDIX TWO

The Shared Ministry Formation Committee

For additional information regarding shared ministry, please contact any member of the committee:

Rick Govan is ministry development facilitator in the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee and may be reached at <rgovan@etdiocese.net>.

Dr. **Michael L. Keene**, chair, is professor of English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, diocesan coordinator for Education for Ministry and program director for summer camps at Grace Point Camp and Retreat Center. He may be reached at <mkeene@utk.edu>.

The Rev. **Patricia Grace** is the curate at St. James Episcopal Church in Knoxville. She also serves on the Board of Examining Chaplains and the KICCUP Executive Board (Knoxville Inner City Churches United for People). She is the author of an honors thesis exploring shared ministry titled, "Total Ministry: Re-thinking the Ministry of the People of God." She may be reached at <revgrace2004@yahoo.com>.

The Rev. Dr. **Susanna Metz** is assistant professor of Contextual Education in the School of Theology at Sewanee: The University of the South. She is executive director of the Center for Ministry in Small Churches and associate priest at St. John the Baptist, Battle Creek, Tenn. She may be reached at <smetz@sewanee.edu>.

The Rev. **David Garrett** serves as ex-officio member of the Shared Ministry Formation Committee. He has been the priest at Church of the Annunciation in Newport since 1978, and he also serves as chairman of the Board of Examining Chaplains and as a member of the Commission on Ministry. He may be reached at <stillinnewport@etdiocese.net>.

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