

Cathedral Ministry Possibilities for Various Areas in the Michigan District

The Goal

To facilitate “maintenance” of, and growth or expansion of ministry in, “flat,” struggling, or declining LCMS congregations and mission outposts in the Michigan District.

The Proposal

Where needed and possible, to develop a partnership comprising the strongest area congregation (the cathedral congregation/church), other area congregations or partner congregations/churches in an association, and the Michigan District (if desired) for the purpose of placing (calling) a pastor on staff of the cathedral congregation who would be deployed to serve several other area partner LCMS congregations for blessing in, and growth of, God’s Kingdom in our midst.

The Plan

- Between 3-5 congregations could/would be served by/share one Associate Pastor.
- Each partner congregation would contract with the designated “cathedral” congregation for a specific level of service.
For example:
 - ⇒ for \$20,000/year, a congregation could expect to have “their” pastor on site one half-day per week + one Sunday per month;
 - ⇒ \$30,000/year might mean he would be on site one full-day (including some evenings) each week + one Sunday per month; etc. These are only rough examples to encourage conversation, creativity, cooperation, and the greater good of all involved.
- During his weekday, or Sunday, at one partner church site, the pastor would make shut-in visits, teach confirmation and/or Bible class, and meet with a Deacon or Elder Chairman to prepare for weekend worship and other ministry situations as needed.
- The pastor would also be available for funerals and weddings as needed. If he were not available, another pastor from the cathedral congregation—or the association of partner congregations—would assist.
- On weekends, when the pastor is serving elsewhere, the service could be led by a lay person. The message could be read by the worship leader or presented by the pastor via video (either recorded or live-streamed. Of course, there should also be a contingency plan in case the internet is down. For example, if services were staggered by 30 minutes, the sermon would almost always be ready for a slightly-time-delayed stream).
- Hospital visits would be coordinated by this Associate Pastor of the cathedral congregation. He could make these visits personally; or he could also enlist the aid of other association pastors for visits in neighboring towns, cities, etc., or of other local pastors for regional medical centers or hospitals in Michigan (i.e., Traverse City, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Detroit, etc.).
- Congregation members of partner churches in the Association would be invited to the cathedral congregation for seminars, workshops, special events, and holiday worship services. If there is an admission charge, all members of Association congregations would contribute at the member rate.
- A meeting of all the pastors in the cathedral partnership association is highly recommended once a month, preferably face-to-face, for knowledge and coordination of activities, encouragement, and support of Kingdom work. The Circuit Winkel meeting, which should also be attended, should not take the place of the face-to-face meeting of the pastors in the cathedral partnership association.

- Every pastor and congregation in the association benefits from an atmosphere of accountability/responsibility. (**What does this mean?** Cf. *Proverbs 27:17: Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another. Hebrews 10:23-25: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*)
- The cathedral congregation would pay the same rate as other congregations for services received from this Associate Pastor.
- Any differences that remain between the position cost for this Associate Pastor and remuneration received from the participating association congregations would either be provided by a rightful division of the difference in cost by all partner congregations in the association or possibly by a mission grant from Circuit Congregations, an area Trust Fund or Foundation, or by the Michigan District.
- The cathedral association would determine how the association would provide funding and mission support for schools attached to association ministries. It would be possible that the school would continue to be supported by its current ministry partner as a ministry of that site alone. It would be possible that the cathedral association congregations choose to distribute the financial support of the school across the association congregations. Open discussion on the viability (spiritually, financially, and practically) of the school should be a matter of continuing prayerful discussion.

Guaranteed Benefits

- Congregations could maintain their own identity (governance, programs, etc.) in their context while stabilizing their ministry.
- Under-served areas would have a stable presence in their midst.
- Phone calls could ring at both the small congregation and at the main office of the cathedral congregation, so phone calls would have a greater potential of being answered by staff.
- The called Associate Pastor of the cathedral congregation would have a strong base of support from the cathedral congregation as well as from the partner congregations in the association.

Potential Benefits

- Under-served areas would have greater potential for growth and experience energy as programs and people are supported by the cathedral congregation.

Hoped-for Benefits

- The view of ministry would change from a “congregation” view to a “Kingdom” view: “Together, how can we win and minister to the most souls for Jesus Christ, Savior of the world?”

Possible Issues

- Will Synod see this as a multi-point parish? ... meaning, what will this do to voting representation at District conventions and Synodical Presidential elections? This isn’t a driving force (hopefully) but needs to be on the table as an issue to be recognized, understood, discussed, and settled.

Definitions

- Cathedral Model: The cathedral model referenced above, in this document, is based on the Roman Catholic cathedral model. The primary congregation, referred to as the cathedral congregation, is the location of the senior pastor for the cathedral association and is generally larger in worship attendance (600 AWA) and capacity (more physical space [sq. ft.]) than other area congregations. Due to its size, the cathedral’s pastor and staff are primarily focused on the leadership training of some of the priesthood (volunteers) or additional paid staff, and on resource development. The

cathedral congregation, through the senior pastor, coordinates pastoral ministry to the association congregations, assists with the training of program leaders (this should be a function of the associate pastor, who would take over program development) and volunteer staff (the priesthood), and provides opportunities for possible cost reduction through staff, equipment [cf. observations below], and facilities sharing when feasible.

The cathedral model differs from a multi-site congregation in that the associate congregations maintain governance and program autonomy from the cathedral congregation.

- Association congregations (Partner congregations): Association congregations are those ministries that have voluntarily chosen to join in partnership with the cathedral association. The association congregation shares a site pastor with other congregations in the association.

Observations

- Financing of this Associate Pastor should include: salary, health insurance, disability and retirement benefits, car allowance, book allowance, conference participation, continuing education, etc., estimated to be between \$63,000 - \$85,000 (please consult *Michigan District Compensation Guide*).
- It is true that congregations involved in this partnership would see an individual reduction in staffing cost because of the shared financial responsibility for the associate pastor of the cathedral congregation, but there is not necessarily a reduction in equipment cost. Although it is normally thought that equipment resources are shared across the association, this, in practice, is what has been discovered by multi-site congregations: equipment cost benefits were negligible. There are some pieces of equipment that need to be present onsite in each location, such as video projectors, printers, and computers. Also, keep in mind that a church with more than two locations almost always requires a full-time technology person, a position rarely needed in the average, single-location ministry.

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