

St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church
Continuing Resolutions

Council Handbook and organizational structure information

1 North Road
Circle Pines, MN 55104

As each has received a gift, employ it for one another,
as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10

Created January 2020

Growing together in God's love to serve others

The Six Key Objectives of St. Mark's Organizational Structure*

Our Structure Will...Keep us true to our Mission and Vision

1. Cover all areas of our mission and vision statement.
2. Include some elements which intentionally support our growing together.
3. Uplift the manner in which we serve others.
4. Align decisions with our mission and vision.

Our Structure Will...Keep Christ at the center of our focus:

1. Devotions
2. Prayer
3. Faith question to share
4. Worship together as a Council

Our Structure Will...Provide those who participate in the ministry of St. Mark with opportunities to serve Christ

1. Work from people's strengths and passions.
2. Match people with similar passions and gifts.
3. Actively encourage new people to participate in the life and ministry of the church.
4. Empower people to live out their callings in God's world.
5. Empower people/groups/teams to try new things.

Our Structure Will...Provide decision making

1. Establish defined areas of ministry.
2. Provide a way to support current ministries.
3. Clarify the role of the staff in the decision making process.
4. Offer avenues for ministry groups to communicate with one another.
5. Employ our mission statement as a tool for evaluating new ideas.

Our Structure Will...Support visioning for the future

1. Emphasize the Council supporting and visioning, not doing.
2. Understand teams and groups are created for doing the doing.
3. Emphasize future activity planning, up to a year in advance.
4. Provide for leadership training.

Our Structure Will...Run the church

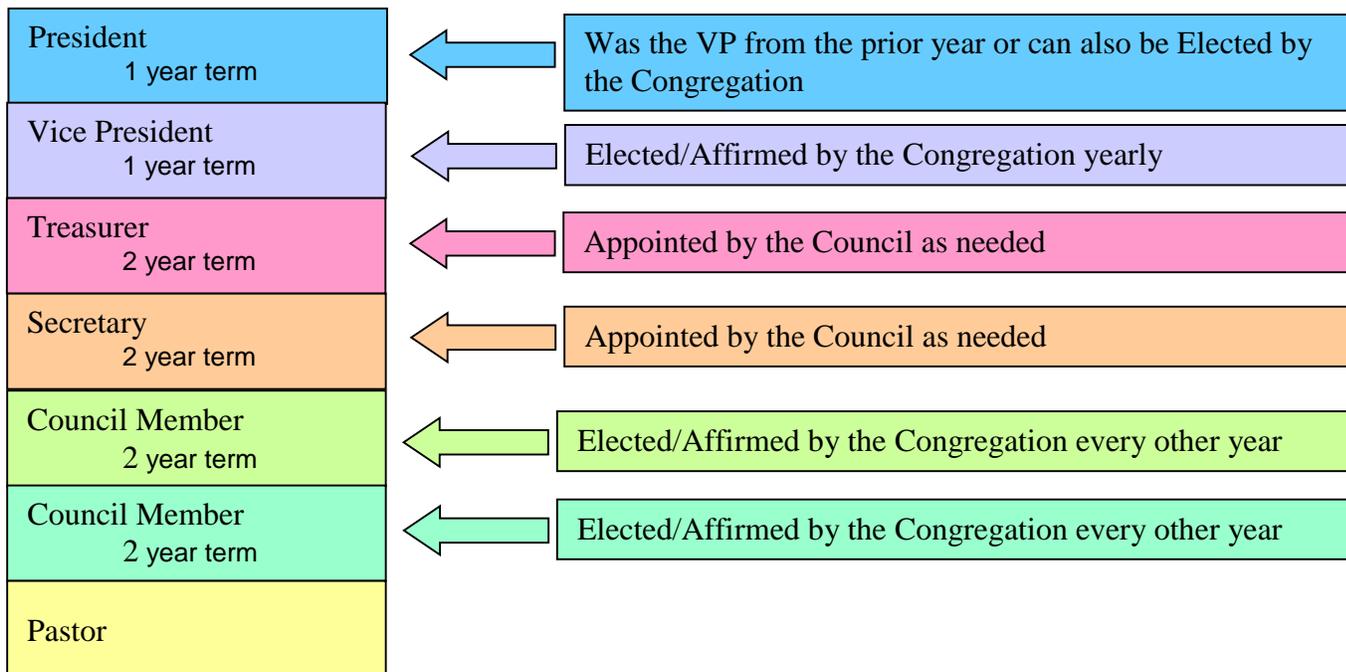
1. Manage finances (e.g. pay bills, payroll, income)
2. Manage Property
3. Support the staff of St. Mark (Job descriptions, Raises, Staff evaluations)
4. Prepare the annual church Plan for Ministry (budget)

*Organizational Structure is not limited to just Council. It refers to the entire eco-system that defines how we organize our ministries together as a congregation. It includes Council, teams, task forces, one time events and social groups.

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Congregation Council Structure

Congregation Council – 7 Members



Congregation Council Description

Council Purpose

The roles and duties of the Congregation Council, as described in Chapter 12 of the St. Mark Constitution, are to grow St. Mark by keeping team, congregation, and staff focus on our mission and vision. Our mission as a church is “Growing together in God’s love to serve others”; in other words, to bring the love of Christ to the community and each other. Our primary tool used for “growing together” or growing disciples, is the Seven Habits of Discipleship. These habits of discipleship help the leaders of the congregation to focus on helping the congregation fulfill their area of ministry.

- **Council Agenda (see Appendix D)** Many agenda items are part of a permanent Agenda used by the Council to focus on mission and vision.
- **Council Agenda Monthly Topics/Focus (see Appendix E)** Many duties of the Council are organized by month.

Congregation Council Accountabilities

The Council is accountable for virtually everything that happens at St. Mark. The Council leadership has high accountability/low control. Teams are responsible for carrying out specific ministries. The Council becomes responsible (actively involved) with tasks where alignment with the mission and vision of St. Mark is required.

Basic Council Member Tasks

Tasks for all Council Members

- Regularly pray for the ministries of the congregation, the other leaders, for people involved in conflicts, for the young people of our congregation, babies who are baptized, the confirmation youth, the families of those who die, etc.
- Attend the monthly Council meetings
- Read the St. Mark Continuing Resolutions and Mission & Vision and understand their contents
- Visit with ministry teams and other ministry groups on a monthly, rotating basis
- Engage in conversation with St. Mark members regarding ministries
- Review Council documents prior to the Council meeting and come prepared with comments, questions and/or suggestions
- Ensure the Council, teams and ministries are working from a vision of ministry that fits with St. Mark’s overall mission and vision
- Partner with and support the work of St. Mark’s staff to increase the effectiveness of all of our ministry programs
- Be open to the Spirit – be willing to try new things or retire old ministries

President (In addition to “Tasks for all Council Members”)

- Create and distribute Council meeting agenda prior to the meeting
- Facilitate the monthly Council meetings, ensuring all voices are being heard
- Chair the Annual Congregation Meeting
- Teach the Vice President through conversation and example the manner in which the President position is conducted
- Maintain open communication between the Council, teams and congregation

- Prayerfully resolve conflicts between members when issues are raised
- Sign contracts and/or legal documents, as required
- Call and facilitate monthly meetings of the Executive Team
- Understand our Congregation’s Constitution and how it is applied

Vice President (In addition to “Tasks for all Council Members”)

- In the absence of the President, facilitate the monthly Council meetings, ensuring all voices are being heard
- In the absence of the President, be the official representative of the Council at Congregation events (e.g., Rite of Affirmation of Baptism)
- Learn through prayer and observation the manner in which the Congregation Council functions with an eye toward assuming leadership in the next year.
- Maintain open communication between the Council, teams and congregation
- Prayerfully resolve conflicts between members when issues are raised
- Attend Executive Team meetings, when held
- Understand our Congregation’s Constitution and how it is applied

Secretary (In addition to “Tasks for all Council Members”)

- Record, edit and distribute minutes from monthly Council meetings
- Submit Council minutes to the church office by the Markings deadline each month
- Record, edit and distribute minutes from the Annual Congregation Meeting
- Sign contracts and/or legal documents, as required
- Attend Executive Team meetings as needed

Treasurer (In addition to “Tasks for all Council Members”)

- Pay the bills when they are due
- Balance the checking account and all other cash assets monthly
- Maintain CDM (or our latest accounting software) for all church financial information and accounts
- Run and distribute financial reports monthly, for the Annual Report, and as needed
- Attend the Finance Team meeting prepared to report on the previous month’s finances (income, expenditures, year-over-year comparisons, etc.)
- With the Finance Team, prepare the Annual Plan for Ministry for presentation at the Annual Congregation Meeting
- Attend Executive Team meetings as needed

Financial Secretary (*non-Council role, appointed by Council*)

- Oversee counting of money process - counters are properly trained, 2-3 people are always present for any counting procedures, money/envelopes are locked in the safe after 1st service
- Record and edit all contributions to individual records in database (CDM)
- Validate deposit information matches bank
- An active and support member of the Finance Team
- Review monthly giving reports
- Provide quarterly giving statements to contributors via mail, email, or on-site

Ministries of St. Mark

St. Mark has six church ministries that work together to help its members to live our Mission Statement: Growing Together in God's Love to Serve Others.

All ministries of the church operate in one of six 'buckets': Community Life, Faith Development, Outreach, Resource, Worship, and Support.

Ministries of the congregation are viewed by Council to exist within one of these categories:

Standing Teams – Meet on a regular basis and fulfill a particular ministry area

Examples: Finance or Stewardship

Service Groups – Provide hands-on ministry through specific activities or events

Examples: Food Shelf, Ushers, Bible Study groups

One Time Ministries – Ministries for a single event that once completed, so is the ministry

Examples: Meals from the Heart, Habitat for Humanity Build

Task Force – A team that is organized for a limited time to accomplish a specific purpose

Examples: Fund Drives or Governance Task Force

Social Groups – Groups of members whose primary purpose is socializing and fellowship

Examples: Softball or Golf League

Congregation Council Responsibilities

Prayer/Worship

- Devotions, along with opening and closing prayers, are essential at every team and Council meeting. Devotions and prayer help to center volunteers on God's Good News and grace in the midst of the busyness of our everyday lives. It is recommended that the Council and teams be aware of the prayer needs of others and regularly pray for each other and the ministries of St. Mark.

Attend Council Meetings

- This is where visioning and communication take place as well as discussion on how to encourage and support the teams and ministries of the church.

Visit with Teams and other Ministries

- Council members are responsible for engaging team members and the congregation. This is done via visitation. Council's role emphasizes a high accountability/low control model, with emphasis on conversation with teams/members to empower them, much as Jesus empowered the original disciples. Visitation can be visiting a team meeting, engaging in an informal narthex conversation, or leading a Town Hall meeting. Visits by Council members are to be viewed as a Council/team partnership. The visitation is a chance for the Council member to listen to team members, learn about what they are doing, and share information/observations at a subsequent Council meeting.
 - How to schedule a meeting—2-4 weeks before the team meeting talk to the team leader and express your desire to attend their meeting.
 - How to approach the team—make it clear that you are there to provide support. You are attending the team meeting to listen and learn. You are not there to check up on

the team, or to micro-manage. You are there to lift up what the team is doing, as well as remove road blocks to performing their ministry.

- At the Visitation Meeting
 - Use the Visitation Aid (Appendix F) as an information gathering tool.
 - Ensure the team you are there to listen and learn, not to judge or micro-manage.
 - Try not to get involved in their meeting. You are there to listen.
 - Are there concerns or items that the Council can help with?
 - Are there scheduling or building use items to take back to Council?
 - Be prepared to share your notes with the team should they desire.
 - Is there a follow-up needed? (other than coming back in 3-4 months).

Mission and Vision

- The alignment of the ministries of the congregation to our mission and vision is a key responsibility of the Council. The mission and vision of St. Mark allows a great deal of freedom in the execution of its ministries. Creating an enabling environment where people are free to grow together in ministry and serve others is at the heart of this.

Strategic Planning

- Planning for the future could include such items as determining when an assessment of our mission and vision is in order, looking at long range staffing needs, starting task forces to tackle large projects, or bringing new ministry concepts to life. Strategic planning generally includes items that are in the future that are not tactical in nature.

Calendaring

- Calendaring is an important communication tool used to help teams schedule events, and ensure there are not conflicts in the yearly schedule.

Annual Meeting

- The Annual Meeting required by our constitution is a time where church leadership and the congregation can focus on the year's successes as a congregation and discuss plans for the coming year.

Council Training

- We recommend that Council training be done on a regular basis. Training can be as simple as a discussion on “where to find information” or an extended discussion on a topic such as how to find and engage volunteers. Some suggested topics:
 - Distribute important documents (Continuing Resolutions, most current Annual Report, Constitution, Endowment Bylaws, Committee list, budget, Facility Use Policy) to new Council members and make them available digitally. Update material, as necessary, for current Council members.
 - Ask Council members to read the St. Mark Constitution and Continuing Resolutions.
 - How do we fulfill and support the mission and vision of the church?
 - Synodical training workshops available.

Succession

- Council terms are two years with the option of adding a second two year term. Council leaders are then encouraged to take a year off or move to another area of leadership.
- A Nominations Team is required by the constitution and will help to find new leaders. It would be best if a team was created that focused on helping congregation members find their gifts.
- The President, Vice President, and two council members are elected/affirmed by the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- The Secretary and Treasurer are appointed by the Council and affirmed by the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- Council and Finance Team should review succession planning and “back-up” planning for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary on an annual basis or as needed.

Communicate Regularly with Congregation

- Visitation
- Publish Council agenda and minutes
- Town Hall Meetings
- Annual Meeting
- Temple talks
- Mailings

Membership Management

- New members' names are presented by the pastor and affirmed by the Council at a regularly held meeting.
- Removing members from the roles will be done on a regular basis per our constitution.

Member Mediation & Rumors/Viruses (See Appendix G)

- We view member meditation as an important role for a Council leader. A Council leader must have an open mind when discussing issues that affect the church and its members. Conflict and disagreement are part of being in community together. A leader listens first, asks questions, and tries to resolve disagreement in a Christ-like manner. A leader tries to bring members with disputes together to come to a mutual resolution. See Appendix J for a model to be used for handling member mediation.
- A virus is a complaint (about the church, a leader or another member), an attitude, or a “problem” which is likely attached to a person, but not always. A virus should be brought to the surface as soon as possible. Leadership desires to see disagreeing parties work together to resolve issues in an open environment. See Appendix H for a model to be used for handling viruses/rumors.

Enter Contracts

- President and Secretary may need to sign contracts and legal documents.

Areas where the Council is not responsible

- A Council member is not the leader of a ministry area.
- Most of the tasks are shared by all Council members: Visitation, calendaring, visioning, removing road blocks for the teams and ministries.
- Council is not responsible for starting new ministries or continuing existing ministries. Council IS responsible for encouraging all members to find their gifts and areas of passion and encourage all members to become actively involved.

Financial Guidelines

- **Contributions:** All gifts made as part of a St. Mark ministry must immediately be placed in the Counter's drawer in the office (or the locked box outside the office) to be included with the weekly deposit. Envelopes are available to indicate the gift designation. No gifts should leave St. Mark property and should not be taken to an individual's home. Individuals receiving money as a vendor, other non-profit, or for a non-St Mark ministry (Bazaar tables, Boy Scout's selling wreathes, etc.) are required to have prior office/church approval to be on-site and it must be obvious where the money is going.
- **Designated funds:** Funds for St. Mark's ministries must be set up by the Treasurer, so gifts collected are credited to the correct fund. All income and expenses for St. Mark ministries will be tracked via the church database (CDM).
- **Financial records:** The church will be responsible for maintaining adequate financial records at the church facilities. Members can request to review financial records by submitting a written request to the finance team. The finance team will make the financial records available with a valid request only. The finance team will determine which requests are valid. The church financial records or copies will not be removed from the church premises without the finance team's approval.
- **Financial reports:** Financial reports of income and expenditures shall be prepared monthly by the treasurer. An annual summary financial report will be prepared for the congregation in the Annual Report.
- **Review of financial records:** The financial records of the church shall be reviewed monthly by the finance team. If there are concerns over the financial records, an ad hoc team will be appointed by the Council to help resolve the concern.
- **Non-tax deductible items:** The normal practice of financial operations of the church is for members to give their tithes and offerings through the general budget of the church. Gifts made where goods or services are received will be indicated as non-tax deductible.
- **Disbursement of funds:** The treasurer and other designated individuals (Pastor/Office Manager) shall be responsible for the disbursement of church funds (excluding Endowment). Two signatures are required for the disbursement of funds. Likewise, funds shall not be disbursed without an adequate receipt or invoice being provided by the individual requesting the funds. Normally, requests for funds should be given at least one week in advance.
- **Church debit card usage policy:** Church debit cards may be made available to church staff members and volunteer team leads, with the finance team's approval. These cards are to be used only for purchases for use by the church or for church sanctioned activities. Receipts must be submitted to the church treasurer with details on the purpose of the expenditure. Receipts must be submitted in a timely manner so as to ensure accurate monthly reporting.

Examples and “what ifs”

- **What are the expectations for Teams?**
 - Teams are the doers of ministry at St. Mark. The council seeks to help teams do ministry by removing roadblocks to their success, and providing encouragement and advice. We do have expectations for teams, especially standing teams. We need to be careful to provide more guidance than direction. Too much direction goes against the philosophy of letting teams be autonomous. Teams should provide: Regular minutes (the result of a meeting); A report for the Annual meeting; and A contact person.
- **What if all ministries are not represented at the Council meeting? How do things get done?**
 - We recognize that most ministry is accomplished with little oversight from the Congregational Council. We want it that way!
 - Standing teams will communicate with the congregation and Council via their minutes, calendaring, and visitation with congregation members.
 - The Council’s responsibility is to know what is happening with teams at St. Mark. They do this through reading team minutes, Calendaring events, Team visitation, and visitation with congregation members.
 - If a Council member reads in team minutes something that raises questions, the Council member should contact the team for clarification, and if necessary invite the team to the Council meeting to discuss.
- **What if I want to start a new ministry?**
 - The Council is to encourage new ministries to flourish. One of St. Mark’s gifts is that ministries are started primarily from the bottom up, from the passion of our members. Active encouragement is recommended.
 - Where someone may wish to start a ministry but does not know how best to do this, connecting these individuals with others in congregation who have started a new ministry is encouraged.
 - Where usage of St. Mark’s resources (staff, budget, or facility) is required, startup ministries are encouraged to work with someone on Council.

Council Mechanics (Process)

Number of Council Members

- There will be seven Council members: The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Pastor make up the Executive Team (required by the constitution). Two council members bring the total number to seven.

Elections

- All Council members are elected/affirmed by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The Secretary and Treasurer are selected by the Council and other nominees are presented by the Nominations Team or nominated from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

Terms of Service

- Terms for Council are two (2) years in length, with the option to “go around again” for a second two year term. The Vice President assumes the role of President in the second year of his/her term or may be elected by the congregation.

Limits of Service

- After two consecutive terms, it is recommended a leader take at least one year off, to recharge, and allow others to grow in discipleship through Council leadership.

Monthly Council Meeting

- The Council Meeting will be focused on visioning and the habit of Encourage. We celebrate and share what the teams are doing and discuss ways to encourage/support them in their mission. The Council's primary focus is the mission and vision of St. Mark. Our primary duty is to help the teams fulfill the mission of the church.

Relationship to Teams

- The Council's relationship to teams is encouragement and support to help teams fulfill their mission. The Council will read team minutes and visit with teams to listen, learn, and provide support.

Chain of Command

- The teams and ministries have the authority (they are responsible) for doing the work of Christ in the church and community.
- The Council is accountable to the mission and vision of St. Mark. The Council becomes responsible if something does not align with the mission and vision of St. Mark. The council may decide an issue by consensus, show of hands, or paper ballot. A determination on method should be made before a decision is made. In most cases a request for a vote, or paper ballot should be granted. On important issues all seven council members will vote.
- The congregation has the ultimate authority. The congregation can decide issues by show of hands or paper ballot at a congregational meeting. The church constitution defines a method to bring an important issue to a congregational vote with strict guidelines on presentation and notification about an issue before a vote can take place. In most cases a request for a paper ballot should be granted.

Budget

- The Finance Team prepares an annual Plan for Ministry (budget), asks for input from the congregation at one or more budget review meetings, asks for input from the Council, and presents it to the congregation at the Annual Meeting for discussion and approval.

Role of Staff on Council

- The Senior Pastor is the only staff member who is a voting member of the Council
- All other staff members support teams and ministries
- Staff attendance at Council meetings is encouraged but not required

Notes on Continuing Resolutions

- This document is St. Mark's Continuing Resolutions. Changes to this document require a 2/3 vote by the Congregation Council. No lead times are required. This handbook does not constitute by-law changes.

Definition of Terms

Congregation Council – Same as the Council. This refers to the entire group of seven people.

Communication Process – A role of our Office Manager is to organize and facilitate communication at St. Mark. (See Appendix B)

One-Time Ministry – Ministry for a single event that once completed, so is the ministry. Usually event driven or task driven. Examples include meetings to organize a Youth Trip or meetings to organize a trip to Feed my Starving Children. One-time ministries include:

- A Contact person (Champion)
- A report to the Council would be welcomed, but not expected.

R.A.C.I - *Responsible, Accountable, Consult, Inform*

- Responsible means you are an active participant in performing the task or duty.
- Accountable means that you are not an active participant, unless the task is not being done.
- Consult means that you are a source of information for the task. Your feedback is requested and shared.
- Inform means you just need knowledge of the task.

Service Groups – Provide hands-on ministry through specific events, often occurring only once.

Social Group – A group of members whose primary purpose is socializing and fellowship. May meet on a regular basis and may fulfill a ministry area. Examples: A sports team, social gatherings, etc. Social groups include:

- A Contact person
- Meeting minutes or a report for the annual meeting would be welcomed but not expected.

Standing Team - Meets on a regular basis to fulfill a ministry area. Examples Social Ministry, Staff Support

- Regular minutes (the result of a meeting)
- Report for the Annual Meeting
- A Contact person

Task Force – A team that is organized by the Council for a limited time, to accomplish a specific purpose.

Teams – Teams are the ministry arms of the congregation. There may be as many teams as needed to fulfill the mission of the congregation. Congregation members should be encouraged to unite around similar passions of ministry.

**Vision Document
April 4, 2000**

Our Mission

Growing together in God's love to serve others.

Our Vision

Empowered by God, we the people of St. Mark will:

- † Foster an open, caring, forgiving environment.
- † Provide choices for inspirational, motivational, and reflective worship experiences.
- † Equip ourselves to be ministers in everyday life.
- † Provide a teaching and learning community for the Gospel of Christ.
- † Serve our local and global community.

Our Values

Our mission and vision are based on these values and beliefs:

- † We profess God the Creator, God the Savior, and God the Holy Spirit.
- † We believe that Word and Sacrament shape our lives.
- † We welcome all people as Children of God.
- † We accept all people wherever they may be on their Christian journey.
- † We acknowledge our need to forgive each other as Christ has forgiven us.
- † We value a nurturing community in which all people are ministers in the work of God.

Our Ministry Areas

- † Community (Community Life)
- † Education
- † Mission (Outreach)
- † Worship
- † Youth

Our Key Enablers

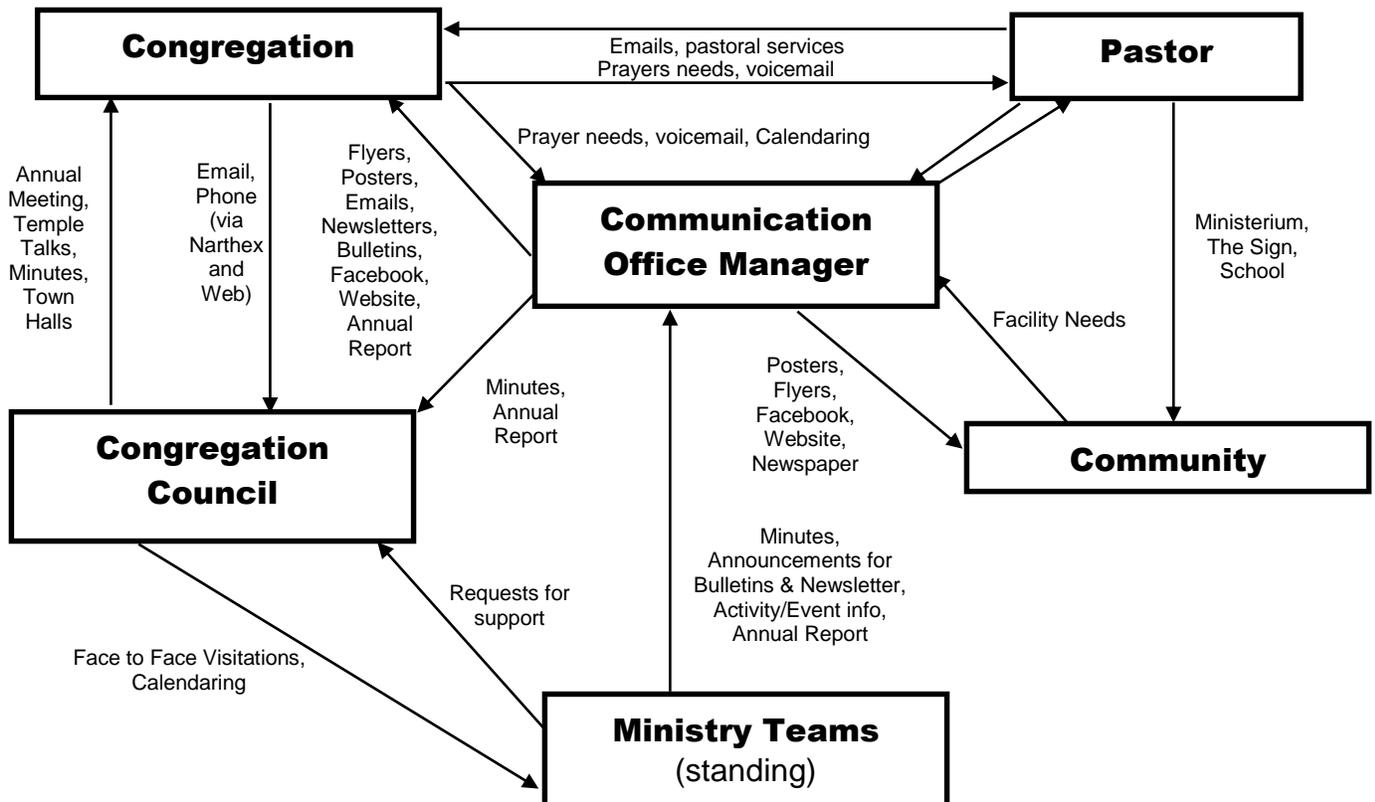
- † Active Membership
- † Staff
- † Facility
- † Money

Appendix B

Communication Process

Communication is a central and integral part of the church.

- It is critical to have a central point of contact for the congregation, team members, as well as the Congregation Council with regard to events and activity schedules at St. Mark.
- Church calendar and team minutes are tools to use in planning consistent communication with the community, as well as the congregation.
- The Church Communication Model below is a visual of how information flows within the church through formal methods. This model does not attempt to designate all of the venues through which communication happens; rather provide a picture of where we have processes defined.
- The Office Manager is available to help organize, define and implement effective communication—ideas and support when promoting or advertising an event.
- The Office Manager is a facilitator for consistent communication with the community, as well as the congregation.
- The Office Manager is the primary contact for church vendor relationships, contracts, and communication flow.



Calendar Process

To help with visioning, and to provide St. Mark with a more effective means of planning ministries, council, the Office Manager, and ministry teams may use the following process to do ‘calendar’. It is recommended to plan ahead as far as possible (e.g., do this once a year for the whole year or twice a year for six months ahead).

- 1) Document. Create a list of the teams that perform ministry.
 - Consider all teams, task forces, fellowship groups, one-time-event groups, etc.
- 2) Brainstorm. For each team, create a list of the events that each has held in the past year.
 - Look at each team, one at a time
 - Don’t evaluate – just make as long of a list as you can
 - Even if you don’t know everything, give this a try – you can check with your teams later
- 3) Brainstorm. Create a list of the events that council, held in the past year.
 - Follow the same process as in #2, but for those activities or events in your ministry area that don’t fall under a team, or those that you, as a council, championed.
 - Also brainstorm new events/activities you might want to consider for the upcoming year.
- 4) Document. For each activity in your list, determine the approximate month in which that activity occurred or will occur. It doesn’t need to be exact.
- 5) Evaluate. Review your list of activities to determine if it will be held in the upcoming year. Consider each one individually, answering the following questions. Have a copy of our Mission and Vision statement handy.
 - Does this activity have a direct fit into our Mission and Vision as a church?
 - Does this activity feel like just a lot of busy-work?
 - Is the primary reason we’ve been doing this “Because we’ve always done this”?
- 6) Calendar. Now that you have your list of activities, update the church calendar.
 - Check with Calendar via the church website or by speaking to the Office Manager.
 - Once a date has been determined to not conflict with another church or community event, request the date verbally or via email to the Office Manager.
 - You will receive an e-mail when your event/activity has been placed on the master calendar. Until that time, it is tentative.

Appendix D

St. Mark Council Agenda

Date, 20xx at 6:00 PM

Purpose: To grow St. Mark by keeping team, congregation, and staff focus on our mission and vision.

- *Purpose is a reminder that our focus is on the mission and vision of the church. Goals are also set each year for ourselves to refine our focus.*

Worship A time to shift gears from the day's hectic schedule and become Christ-centered with peace and renewal.

Who is living out our Mission and Vision (who do we need to thank this month?)

- *Not so much of who do we need to thank, but who is living our mission and vision.*

Prayer Concerns

Prayer concerns help us realize we are here to serve St. Mark, our church family

Pastor's Report

Working Together - Team Reports

Items for Discussion

Action items

- *Done at the end of the meeting to ensure all are clear about their "homework"*

Agenda for next month (*Important topics for the next meeting.*)

- Visitation assignments for next month

Ministry Highlights for the Markings (*Communication with the congregation*)

Luther's Evening Prayer

NEXT Meeting: Date AT 6:00 pm

Our Mission

- Growing Disciples
- Serving Others

The 7 Habits of Discipleship

- Worship
- Prayer
- Study
- Encourage
- Give
- Serve
- Invite



Council Agenda Monthly Topics/Focus

January Agenda

- Visioning:
- Prepare for the Annual Meeting

February Agenda

- Annual Meeting recap
- Visioning: Seven Habits: Serve
- Synod Leader Training
- New Leader Training, Updates to Council binders

March Agenda

- Visioning: Seven Habits: Study
- Setting Congregation Goals

April Agenda

- Visioning: Seven Habits: Worship

May Agenda

- Calendar Clearing
- Start Nominations Task Force
- Visioning: Seven Habits: Prayer

June Agenda

- Visioning Retreat

July Agenda

-

August Agenda

- Visioning: Seven Habits: Invite

September Agenda

- Visioning: Seven Habits: Encourage

October Agenda

- Visioning: Seven Habits: Give

November Agenda

- Plan for Ministry (Annual Budget)
- Visioning:

December Agenda

- Visioning:
- Prepare for the Annual Meeting

Appendix F

St. Mark Council Visitation Aid

Name _____

Date _____

Team _____

Please use this form as a guide for recording your thoughts/observations during your visit. Keep in mind that the goal of the visitation is to LISTEN to what is happening with the team, with an ear toward how this team is supporting our Mission and Vision. Listen carefully for how the Seven Habits of Discipleship are being lived.

In what key activities is the team currently engaged?

Is the team struggling with any issues?

What have you heard that might be recognized by Council?

In what ways might Council support this team in their ministry?

Check which of these seven habits you hear actively supported by this team, and jot any notes:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Worship | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Serve | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pray | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Study | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Give | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourage | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Invite | _____ |

Other Notes on your visit:

Guidelines for Handling Member Mediation & Rumors/Viruses

In order for the congregation and the Congregation Council to deal effectively with issues, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- All members affirm their right to express their opinions about the life and ministry of the congregation.
- Congregation members are encouraged to share their opinions directly with the pastor, Congregation Council, teams, and at congregational meetings.
- When members of the congregation express an opinion to a member of the Council, the Councilperson shall ask, “What would you like me to do with this information?”
- If the member desires to have the information transmitted to the Council, the member shall be invited to bring the information/opinion to the next Council meeting. The date and time shall be given.
- If the member does not wish to appear in person, the Council member shall ask the member for permission to use their name in reporting. If permission is not given, the Council member shall say, “I am sorry, but I will not be able to report this to the Council, since we do not deal with anonymous letters or comments.”
- If permission is given, the Council member shall report the information/opinion to the Council and use the member’s name.
- At his/her discretion, a Council member may ask that the member refer this issue to another Council member for presentation.
- Each issue shall be placed on the agenda and written in the minutes, along with action taken by the Council. Action may include: “received as information”, “pastor and/or president to visit member and report at next meeting”, etc.
- Opinions may be share in writing with the Council and shall be handled in the above-mentioned manner if the letter or statement is signed.

Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love

Commitments for Christians in Times of Disagreement

Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.... But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. (Eph. 4:3, 15) As individual members of the body of Christ, we pledge that we shall:

In Thought

Accept Conflict — Acknowledge together that conflict is a normal part of our life in the church. (Romans 14:1-8, 10-12, 17-19; 15:1-7)

Affirm hope — Affirm that as God walks with us in conflict we can work through to growth. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Commit to prayer — Admit our needs and commit ourselves to pray for a mutually satisfactory solution (no prayers for my success or for the other to change but to find a joint way). (James 5:16)

In Action

Go to the other — Go directly to those with whom we disagree; avoid behind-the-back criticism. (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-20)

In the spirit of humility — Go in gentleness, patience and humility. Place the problem between us at neither doorstep and own our part in the conflict instead of pointing out the others. (Galatians 6:1-5)

Be quick to listen — Listen carefully, summarize and check out what is heard before responding. Seek as much to understand as to be understood. (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13)

Be slow to judge — Suspend judgments, avoid labeling, end name calling, discard threats, and act in a non-defensive, non-reactive way. (Romans 2:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26)

Be willing to negotiate — Work through the disagreements constructively. (Acts 15; Philippians 2:1-11)

- Identify issues, interests, and needs of both (rather than take positions).
- Generate a variety of options for meeting both parties' needs (rather than defending one's own way).
- Evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not one side's values).
- Collaborate in working out a joint solution (so both sides gain, both grow and win).
- Cooperate with the emerging Disagreement (accept the Possible, not demand your ideal).
- Reward each other for each step forward; toward agreement (celebrate mutuality).

Appendix H (continued)

In Life

Be steadfast in love — Be firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution; be stubborn in holding to our common foundation in Christ; be steadfast in love. (Colossians 3:12-15)

Be open to mediation — Be open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in mediation in the larger church. (Philippians 4.1-3)

Trust the community — We will trust the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to others in the congregation or from the broader church. (Acts 15)

- In one-to-one or small group disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate.
- In congregational, conference, or denominational disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate or implement constitutional decision-making processes, insuring that they are done in the spirit of these guidelines, and abiding by whatever decision is made.

Be the Body of Christ — Believe in and rely on the solidarity of the Body of Christ and its commitment to peace and justice, rather than resort to the courts of law. (1 Corinthians 6:1-6)