

MUTUAL MINISTRY

A TOOL FOR EVALUATION OF CONGREGATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERS

**Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod- ELCIC
Adapted from the ELCA "Evaluating Mutual Ministry"**

EVALUATING OUR MINISTRY

AN OVERVIEW

Evaluation of ministry is always occurring. Laity are always evaluating professional leaders and vice versa. The settings happen over coffee, over the car bumper in the church parking lot, over Sunday dinner, or in the narthex as greetings are being exchanged.

The setting for evaluating ministry can also be ordered and guided. It can be given structure and regularity. It also needs to be creatively channeled and utilized. It should also be constructive- in building up the body of Christ.

The purpose of evaluation is to strengthen the church. Lutheran theology affirms that ministry belongs to the whole people of God. All baptized people have gifts that can be used in service to both the church and the world. In Romans 12:6 we are reminded that we have differing gifts, so let us use them. We want to use those gifts wisely, constructively and creatively.

Evaluation should measure mutual ministry, the ministries of both the laity and the rostered ministers. The evaluation should include all aspects of daily life and work and not be exclusive to those ministries carried out in the institution. The purpose of evaluation is to improve our mutual understanding of God's mission and to strengthen our ministries together and individually.

The key to this approach is people in ongoing dialogue. With that in mind, each congregation should establish a Mutual Ministry Committee. The committee would then work with established guidelines to foster and guide ongoing dialogue. Various tools for evaluation are also available.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the following should also be considered when engaged in leadership evaluations:

1. Evaluation is not a pass-fail test which focuses only on the ministry of the rostered ministers or staff.
2. Evaluation cannot take place if there is widespread discontent with the leadership. Discontent should be dealt with directly and openly, not as part of evaluating ministry. However ongoing evaluation can prevent such crisis from occurring.
3. Evaluation is not a thirty minute item on a committee agenda. Nor is it just the circulation of a survey. It takes time. It takes people. It is a dialogue between members of the congregation and its professional leaders.

4. Evaluation must have a base line from which to measure. Articulated and mutually agreed upon criteria are needed in light of which the course of ministry can be evaluated. Evaluating ministry is not merely subjective likes and dislikes.
5. Evaluation of mutual ministry takes into consideration a broad range of concerns including the work of the whole church and the service of God's people in the world. It is not limited simply to immediate and local institutional goals.

BENEFITS FOR EVALUATION

A variety of benefits emerge when a specific group carries out an ongoing plan for evaluating the ministry of the congregation and its professional leaders.

1. Evaluation can assist the congregation in identifying and affirming the special gifts and skills of the professional leaders and the laity.
2. It provides a forum for reviewing the changing needs and goals of the congregation.
3. The results of the evaluation can be used as an informal basis for planning.
4. Evaluation encourages those involved to deal with realities and set priorities. Time finances and people resources are limited.
5. The procedure encourages a shared approach to ministry. No one person is expected to do everything that needs doing in a congregation.
6. If evaluation is an ongoing process shared by an ongoing group, it eliminates the pass-fail attitude and the fear that so often is associated with evaluation.
7. It encourages those who share ministry to be forward looking.
8. Evaluating mutual ministry makes ministry together more satisfying and effective.

CHOOSING A MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Church councils should initiate the establishment of a mutual ministry committee but not have members of council on the committee. Four to eight people who are committed to mutual ministry should be chosen, with at least one or two people chosen by the professional leader. It is recommended that representation come from various leadership areas within the congregation, i.e. worship, learning, witness, service, youth, ELW, lay professionals, etc. Terms should be set to a maximum of five years, with staggering of terms to provide for continuity.

The structure of the committee should be decided internally, with input by all members. The structure should include how often the committee will meet, who will chair the meeting, how information is gathered for the committee to review, and how outcomes are reported to church council. Committee members are accountable to one another for maintaining strict confidentiality.

PURPOSE OF A MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The primary function of the mutual ministry committee is to keep the professional leader advised about the conditions within the congregations and to interpret to the congregation the ministry of the professional leaders.

This committee should:

- Have open communication concerning the attitudes and conditions within the congregation
- Be aware of early warnings of misunderstanding within the congregation.
- Be a listening post for the professional leader and the congregation
- Engage in conflict resolution
- Appraise the ministry of the professional leader and the congregation
- Be a sounding board for the professional leader in time of personal or professional stress
- Identify continuing education that would assist the ministry of the professional leader and the goals of the congregation
- Have concern for the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the professional leaders.

FUNCTIONS OF A MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Four general areas of function are as follows:

1. Selection:
 - a) preparing job descriptions for all staff
 - b) serve as a personnel committee for support staff of a congregation
2. Education:
 - a) identifying continuing education possibilities in light of concerns and ministry goals of the congregation, the professional leader and the synod
 - b) Enabling the professional leader to participate in continuing education by mutual commitment of time, money and planning
3. Evaluation:
 - a) Sharing with the professional leader the expectations of the congregation
 - b) providing for an annual evaluation and theological reflection upon the ministry of the professional leader and the mission of the congregation
 - c) Providing for periodic review of the call or contract extended to the professional leader
4. Support:
 - a) Serving as a personal and confidential support group to the professional leaders
 - b) Serving as an open communication channel regarding the conditions and attitudes of the congregation.
 - c) Serving as agents of reconciliation in time of conflict in the congregation
 - d) Reviewing annually the details of the compensation package provided for the professional leader and staff.

Four models of evaluation follow. Not all models should be used in the same year. Not all models fit all situations. Your needs and your past evaluations will help determine your choice at this point.

MODELS FOR EVALUATING MINISTRY

Anniversary of Call or Contract Review

An anniversary can be a time for celebration. It is an appropriate time to review together the past, acknowledge good and bad times together, and make fresh commitments for your future together.

The goal is to check expectations regarding the leadership needs of the congregation and the leadership provided by the rostered leader. The congregation and the leader focus on the following:

- The Letter of Call
- The congregational profile developed during the vacancy
- Signed Contract agreements
- Job descriptions
- Congregational constitution and bylaws
- Any written expectations agreed to at the time of call or contract

Work through the following steps:

- Review the expectations stated in the Congregational Profile and other documents above. Provide copies of these documents to all participants. Remember, this is what was said THEN. Perceptions may have been incorrect. Expectations may have been unclear. The situation may have changed. Review what the stated expectations were. Once you have a common understanding of what was said in the past, then move on to the NOW.
- Evaluate where you are at now, at 12 months, at 24 months, at 36 months. Use the following questions:

List the three most exciting or significant things that occurred in your congregation during the past 12 months, (24, 36, etc.)

List the three most disappointing or frustrating things that occurred in your congregation in the past 12 months (24,36,etc.)

What are the three most productive, meaningful, appreciated aspects of your professional leaders' ministry?

What are the three most misunderstood, least appreciated, or least helpful aspects of your professional leaders' ministry?

Share the responses within the group. Choose a recorder to list the responses. After the comments have been shared, ask for clarification, look for common themes, analyze your current situation. Summarize by answering the question “Where are we now as professional leader and congregation?”

- Ask the question: “In what three areas could we strengthen our ministry together?”

After all of the suggestions have been recorded, identify those that are similar or closely related. List five or six suggestions that summarize the thinking of the group.

From the list, identify three that will most likely strengthen your ministry together. Start by identifying those that are most needed and most likely to bring growth.

- Develop specific strategies to strengthen mutual ministry in the three areas identified.

Be specific about the what, why, who and when of your strategies and name at least three strategies.

Share the strategies with the church council and professional leaders.

Implement the strategies you have outlined. They are no good if they are left on paper. They require action.

Reflections and Directions of Continuing Education

The goal of this evaluation tool is to review the most recent year of ministry and to identify how continuing education might strengthen the ministry of the professional leader. The Mutual Ministry Committee should reflect on the areas of ministry outlined below, identify the strengths of the professional leader, identify the goals of the congregation and make specific suggestions where continuing education by the professional leaders might strengthen mutual ministry. The Lutheran church looks to an educated leadership. Therefore all professional leaders are expected to participate in ongoing continuing education and the national church has developed a Continuing Education Plan for professionals to participate in.

A reflections and Directions worksheet is found at the end of this section. The Mutual Ministry Committee members should all complete the worksheet. Rate the strengths according to the outline.

Once the strengths of the professional leader have been identified, it is important to identify the congregational goals. List the **five** most important goals or needs of your congregation for the future. Then list them in order of priority. Each committee member should share the goals with the group and discuss all suggestions. Several goals may be related to the same concerns.

Identify **three or four** goals that have priority for the coming year. You can also set aside goals for two years or five years if you are looking for short term and long term goals for the congregation. These goals should be shared with appropriate planning groups and church council.

The final step for this model of evaluation should be as follows:

In light of the summary of strengths and priority goals, identify three specific directions or suggestions for continuing education for the professional leader during the coming year which will strengthen your ministry together.

Identify specific plans that include, funding, time off, and follow up evaluation. The plan may also be submitted to church council.

Components of a Continuing Education Program

1. Biblical, doctrinal and historical theology- growth in knowledge and articulation of the Christian faith and our Lutheran heritage.
2. Personal and Spiritual Growth- growth in spiritual and personal maturity, i.e. human relationships, marriage, communication, prayer, spiritual discipline
3. Skills for ministry- growth in leadership and functioning in ministry, i.e. administration, time management, dealing with change, preaching, teaching, counseling, etc.
4. Issues in Church and Society- growth in awareness about the context of and the concerns for ministry in today's world, i.e. urban or rural issues, small and struggling congregations, human rights, world hunger, etc.
5. Career Assessment and development- growth in planning for and dealing with changes within life and career, i.e. review of call, changing parishes, mobility, career goals, retirement, etc.

REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS WORKSHEET

Name _____

Date _____

Listed below are five ministry functions, with 36 items for reflection. Rate the professional leaders' strengths and competencies using the following designations. (Place number designation in blank column)

1. very effective
2. moderately effective
3. less effective
4. do not know
5. does not apply

WORSHIP		
	Evidence of personal spiritual and devotional growth	
	preaching and or speaking before groups	
	Enjoy and use music and the arts to enhance worship	
	Ability as a worship leader	
LEARNING		
	Communicate a comprehensive understanding of the bible and Christian theology from a Lutheran perspective	
	Interpreting current issues in our society and the world	
	Helping others plan for a balance between work and leisure	
	Teaching Lutheran heritage, theology, and worship understanding	
WITNESS		
	Witness through personal or family lifestyle	
	Enable persons to become aware of community needs and participate in action and advocacy	
	Personal use of time	
	Combining personal goals for ministry with congregational goals	
	Enabling persons to witness in their everyday life	
	Provide leadership to programs of the church in the synod and the ELCIC	
	Involvement in ecumenical and community activities	
	Involvement in community as volunteer	
SERVICE		
	Relating the Christian faith to society, politics and world issues	
	Talking with people about moral and personal problems	
	Support persons in the midst of crisis or with major decisions	

	such as career, marriage, education, family, etc.	
	Teach and relate to preschool and elementary age children	
	Teach, work and relate well with high school and college age persons	
	Teach and lead adults in faith development	
	Teach, work and lead older adults and geriatric ministry	
	Helping persons deal with current social issues	
SUPPORT		
	Planning for congregational life and mission	
	Skilled in working with groups and volunteers	
	Coping with conflicts within the congregation	
	Oversee the affairs of the organization and staff and development of programs	
	Inspire and motivate persons in developing and using individual and group resources in the service of the church (stewardship)	
	Ability to introduce and implement change	
	Maintaining positive personal and peer relationships	
	Motivating, training, and affirming leadership in the congregation	
	Planning for the future in own life and ministry	
	Building a sense of mutual or shared ministry with all members	
	Support and nurture persons by visiting with them in their homes and places of employment	

Appraising Leadership

The goal of this evaluation is to help a congregation and professional leader examine leadership. Who makes the decisions? How are decisions made? What types of leadership is exercised? Where is leadership needed? Leadership issues involving both professional leaders and laity are considered. Key components of church leadership are identified and these help facilitate discussion about how those elements can be strengthened and affirmed.

Competent, effective, faithful and stimulating leadership is essential in the life of every congregation. Such leadership is needed from both the professional leader and laity. Leaders give direction, set the pace, take initiative, study the issues, promote creativity and generate enthusiasm. They also are sensitive to people and have an ability to work with, involve and bring out the best in them.

It is assumed that the professional leader and the Mutual Ministry Committee have developed sufficient trust to explore opening together the dynamics of leadership. It is also assumed that there are some situations in which leadership is to be shared and other situations where it is appropriate that certain individuals or groups take the initiative. A third assumption is that leadership involves envisioning, goal setting, and communication processes, and is therefore, more than a matter of just implementing or managing programs developed by others.

Each member of the Mutual Ministry Committee and the professional leaders complete the Worksheet that follows this section. Circle **one** response for each question. Then in the final columns, for each question give a score of 1 if you marked A, 2 if you marked B, 3 if you marked C and 4 if you marked D. Add in the scores from other committee members and place the average for each question in the column marked Averages. For example, if seven participants had scores of 2,3,4,4,4,4, and 1, the total score for question 1 would be 22 and the average would be 3.1, which would be placed in the column "averages". Those items with low averages are areas of leadership that need strengthening.

Once areas have been identified, discussion and consensus should help the group to decide on **three** areas of leadership that need strengthening. Discuss any wide variations in the responses of individuals in the group. Determine whether the variance is due to a certain behaviour or activity or due to how different individuals perceived a particular leadership matter.

After you have decided on three areas of leadership that need strengthening, develop a strategy for each by asking the following questions:

- What is our strategy?
- Who will be involved?
- What steps will we take
- When do we start?
- How do we evaluate our growth?

Appraising Leadership Worksheet

For each question place the following number that best describes the answer.

1. professional leader
2. a few key members
3. council
4. council and professional leader

QUESTION	ANSWER SCORE	OTHER GROUP RESPONSES	TOTAL OF GROUP ANSWERS	AVERAGE OF TOTAL
Who makes major policy decisions for the congregation?	i.e. 3	3,4,4,4,4,1	23	3.1
Who makes major policy decisions for the congregation?				
Who makes decisions about programs?				
Who makes decisions about expenditures?				
Who develops the budget?				
How are congregational goals developed?				
Where is the responsibility felt for achieving or advancing parish goals?				

For each question place the following number that best describes the answer.

Always=1

Often=2

Sometimes=3

Rarely=4

Question	Answer Score	Other Group Responses	Total of Group Answers	Average of Total
Is there an informal group resisting a formal one?				
Is adequate interpersonal communication evident in the parish?				
Are parish goals communicated to the congregation?				
Is there congregational support for goals once they are developed?				
Do laity assume leadership initiative?				
Is there a clear distinction between the roles of laity and professional?				
Is dissent dealt with well?				
Do group leaders and committees include the professional leader in decisions related to the group's task?				
Is the ministry of the laity recognized and affirmed?				

Question	Answer Score	Other Group Responses	Total of Group Answers	Average of Total
Are resources available to support and strengthen the ministry of laity?				
Are members rigid in their expectations of the role of the professional leader?				
Are the various committees and group leaders involved in decision making related to the tasks of their group?				
Does the professional leader take leadership initiative?				
Are the council and professional leader sensitive to one another?				

Please circle the statement that most fits your understanding. Then place a score in the last column for your answer as follows:

none=1

some= 2

balanced= 3

Considerably= 4

Question					Answer score	Other group responses	Total of Group answer	Average Of total
Is ministry happening outside of your congregation?	none	some	Balanced with congregational ministry	considerably				

Question	None	some	substantial	complete	Answer Score	Other Group Responses	Total of Group Answers	Average of total
Does the professional leader show confidence in the laity?								
Does the congregation show confidence in the professional leader?								

Considering the five functions of the congregation, how well is the leadership carried out in each of these areas?

not well=1

adequately=2

well=3

extremely well=4

Area	Answer score	Other group responses	Total of group responses	Average of total
Professional Leadership:				
Worship				
Learning				
Witness				
Service				
Support				
Lay Leadership:				
Worship				
Learning				
Witness				
Service				
Support				

Review of mission, time and compensation

The goal of evaluation in this model is to evaluate the mission of the congregation, analyze how the professional leader has invested time in serving the congregation and review the compensation and benefits provided the professional leader. This model is used when the evaluation goal is in the area of support. The Mutual Ministry Committee and the professional leader will also identify priorities for time investment during the coming year.

Through the Holy Spirit, God calls the baptized persons into community- a congregation. The mission is viewed in terms of worship, learning, witness, service and support. Decisions about time, energy, abilities, and gifts will affect mission priorities. The compensation package we provide professional leaders should reflect the prior decisions we have made regarding mission and use of time.

This evaluation should be done months in advance of congregational budget preparation.

Read the ELCIC Model Constitution for Congregations or your congregation's approved constitution. Note the key words and thoughts about ministry, i.e. worship, learning, witness, serving, support.

Acknowledge the things you do well as a congregation. Affirm the gifts of the professional leader. Identify common themes. List ways your congregation may improve or extend your ministry in each area. List suggestions in each functional area where growth might be helpful regarding the work of the professional leader.

Answer the following questions:

List the two most significant things that occur in your congregation within each functional area. You may list service, programs, or descriptions of activity.

WORSHIP	LEARNING	WITNESS	SERVICE	SUPPORT
1.				
2.				

List the two most appreciated aspects of the professional leader's ministry within each functional area. You may list skills or descriptions of activity.

WORSHIP	LEARNING	WITNESS	SERVICE	SUPPORT
1.				
2.				

God has given your congregation many opportunities for ministry. List one suggestion of how you might improve or extend the ministry in each functional area.

WORSHIP	LEARNING	WITNESS	SERVICE	SUPPORT
1.				

Your professional leader cannot do everything. In light of this, list one suggestion in each functional area where growth might be helpful regarding the work of the professional leader.

WORSHIP	LEARNING	WITNESS	SERVICE	SUPPORT
1.				

Investment of Time in Mission

Your professional leader has limited time, energy and gifts. Because it is difficult to say no when so many things are needed, the Mutual Ministry Committee can be very helpful in analyzing the past use of time and projecting some estimates for the future. If records are not kept, then a general estimate is fine. Analyze the time investment in light of the congregational mission discussed earlier in this model.

Ask the following questions in a discussion:

1. Is everyone satisfied with time distributions among the various functions?
2. Should any adjustments be made in the future? Why?
3. Is the total time invested each week or month realistic and/or fair?
4. What would be a reasonable estimate for future time commitments?

You may use the following to estimate investment of time over 12 months.

	# hrs per week/month	% of total working time
1. Activity related to WORSHIP	_____	_____
2. Activity related to LEARNING	_____	_____
3. Activity related to WITNESS	_____	_____
4. Activity related to SERVICE	_____	_____
5. Activity related to SUPPORT	_____	_____
Total hours per wk/mth	_____ hrs	Total=100%

 You may use the following to set a new estimate of investment of time over the next 12 months.

	# hrs per week/month	% of total working time
1. Activity related to WORSHIP	_____	_____
2. Activity related to LEARNING	_____	_____
3. Activity related to WITNESS	_____	_____
4. Activity related to SERVICE	_____	_____
5. Activity related to SUPPORT	_____	_____
Total hours per wk/mth	_____ hrs	Total=100%

Worksheet- Compensation Package

Item	Present	Future
Salary	\$ _____	\$ _____
Housing Allowance or equity	\$ _____	\$ _____
Pension	\$ _____	\$ _____
Health and Dental Benefits	\$ _____	\$ _____
Mileage	_____ /km	_____ /km
Book Allowance	\$ _____	\$ _____
Continuing Education Plan	\$ _____	\$ _____
Vacation Days/weeks	_____	_____
Study Leave	_____	_____
Weekly Days Off	_____	_____
Other Benefits	_____	_____
	_____	_____