DIOCESE OF EASTON **DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD**

Shared Ministry Covenant

August, 2024

St. Alban's Episcopal Church and Faith Lutheran Church have shared ministries since 2022. including sharing a cleric. Both churches have the support of their congregations for this shared ministry project. The reasons for this shared ministry include:

1) We share similar spiritual and social values, as well as liturgical worship practices.
2) The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America have been in full communion since 2000. Ordained ministers in both denominations may and do serve as clergy in either tradition.
3) Our physical locations are close to each other. This is advantageous and convenient to our members to be able to worship, serve, and fellowship together.
4) We have for years shared partnerships in worship, study, and Vacation Bible School. These efforts have yielded heightened enthusiasm, increased understanding of the commonalities between the Episcopal and Lutheran traditions, and determination to proceed with a shared ministry.
5) Given the challenges and opportunities of diminishing church attendance, aging clergy ranks and a reduced number of seminarians, the strategy of pursuing a single cleric, combining capital and human resources, has evident practical and financial advantages for both churches.
6) The two churches are not identical, and there is no intention of combining the two congregations. Each will maintain their separate identity, liturgy, leadership, and finances, as well as specific goals and projects that may not be shared.

This document is a framework of our plans, not a detailed blueprint. The expectation is that this arrangement is open to review and adjustment as it is lived into.

On an annual basis, the Canon for transition in the Diocese of Easton and the Delaware-Maryland Synod will meet with executive committees from both parishes to reflect on the covenant, to identify what it is believed God is saying at this time, to look for future opportunities for collaboration and to support the ministry of the cleric.

Some pertinent elements of the proposed shared ministry are briefly described below:

Shared Ministry

The two faith communities and the cleric will collaboratively explore opportunities to work together via fellowship, worship and social justice initiatives.

Worship

The Letter of Agreement (LOA – separate document) will indicate when each congregation will hold weekly worship services using appropriate liturgy. Special services, such as those during Christmas and Holy Week, will be mutually determined by discussions between the clergy and the two churches.

Pastoral Care

The cleric will provide pastoral care to both congregations as needs arise within the bounds of the contracted hours. The two faith communities and the cleric will collaboratively determine how to care for parishioners in a flexible schedule of pastoral needs and in developing and expanding the lay capacity. More specific information may be provided in the LOA.

Vestry / Church Council Meetings

The cleric will preside at Vestry meetings at St. Alban's and attend Church Council meetings at Faith.

Office Hours

In general, office hours will be flexible and the schedule will be well communicated on a weekly basis at both churches. The Vestry, Church Council and the pastor will agree to honor their day off / Sabbath.

Compensation and Benefits

Faith will contribute up to1/4 of the compensation package, with St. Alban's contributing the remainder of the final negotiated amount. Faith's contribution shall not increase more than 5% from the previous year's payment unless approved by
Faith's Congregational Council. The actual pay and individual benefits amounts will be delineated in the LOA. During the creation of the LOA, the employer of record for pension, disability and other medical benefits will be determined. The LOA will also include information related, but not limited to, expenses, leave, supplementary compensation, wellness and mutual ministry review.

August 21, 2024
Date

St. Alban's Episcopal Church

Senior Warden

Reviewed by
Diocesan Transitional Ministry Officer

Approved by
Bishop Santosh Marray

09-03-2024

Faith Lutheran Church

Council President

Reviewed by
Synod Transitional Ministry Officer

Approved by
Bishop William Gohl

09-13-2024

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