BLENDING MINISTRIES
(Merger or Consolidation)

OF
CONGREGATIONS OF THE
ELCA

A STUDY BOOKLET WITH HELPS
AND
CASE STUDIES

PREPARED BY
THE DIVISION FOR OUTREACH
ELCA

MAY 1996
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. STEPS FOR MERGER OR CONSOLIDATION OF CONGREGATIONS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A general guide prepared by the Office of the Secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. STEPS FOR BLENDING MINISTRIES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(This page can be used with congregations in exploring the possibility of blending ministries with others)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. PROCEDURES CONCERNING RELATIONSHIPS OF CONGREGATIONS IN PROCESS OF BLENDING MINISTRIES</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. WHY USE A THIRD PARTY CONSULTANT</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. POTENTIAL INTER-PERSONAL CONFLICTS DURING BLENDING OF MINISTRIES</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CARE FOR THE EXISTING STAFF AND PASTOR</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. GUIDELINES/STEPS IN BLENDING OF MINISTRIES’ AGREEMENTS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A SYND STRATEGY FOR BLENDING OF MINISTRIES</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MINISTRY READINESS AND REALIZING FULL POTENTIAL</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MODELS OF BLENDING MINISTRIES (CASE STUDIES)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODEL NO 1. A STRONG EVANGELISM COMMITTED BLENDING</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODEL NO 2. A MULTICULTURAL BLENDING WITH A NEW</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTENTIONAL OUTREACH FOCUS

MODEL NO 3. A RELOCATION OF TWO BLENDING CONGREGATIONS 47

MODEL NO 4. TWO STRONG CONGREGATIONS BLEND FOR GREATER POTENTIAL MINISTRY 49

MODEL NO 5. A BLENDING OF CONVENIENCE 51

MODEL NO 6. A BLENDING AND ADJUSTMENT IN MISSION 53

MODEL NO 7. A BLENDING DISCUSSION THAT RESULTED IN CLARITY FOR BOTH PARTIES BUT A DECISION NOT TO BLEND 55

MODEL NO 8. A BLENDING DISCUSSION THAT LED TO A COOPERATIVE MINISTRY BUT MAINTAINED THEIR SEPARATE IDENTITIES 57

11. SAMPLE PLAN AND AGREEMENT OF BLENDING OF MINISTRIES 59

TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. SAMPLE MODEL FOR RECOMMENDATION FOR DISPOSITION OF REAL ESTATE ASSETS FROM (CHURCH) MEMBERS OF BLENDING OF MINISTRIES TASK FORCE</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. PROCEDURES FOR A JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. AGENDA FOR BLENDING OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. SCRIPT FOR MEETING OF MEMBERS</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. SAMPLE NOTICE OF LEGAL MEETING</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. SAMPLE NOTICE FOR A SPECIAL MEETING</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. SAMPLE NOTICE OF BLENDING OF MINISTRIES TO BE PUBLISHED</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. SAMPLE BALLOT

20. SAMPLE AFFIDAVIT

21. STEPS IN THE DISSOLUTION OF A CONGREGATION

EXHIBIT A

SAMPLE COMPLETED ASSESSMENT FOR MINISTRY READINESS AND MISSION POTENTIAL PROFILE
PREFACE

The Board for the Division for Outreach asked that the staff prepare a booklet on blending ministries.

The following materials should help congregations considering this process with ideas and procedures for successful blendings of ministries. The outline includes the official policy of the ELCA for merging ministries and the Division for Outreach procedures for blendings of ministries. Also included are 6 models of actual blending ministries, including official illustrations of actions and resolutions. There are 2 illustrations where discussions affirmed continued separation or cooperation but not merger.

The state government recognizes the words of consolidation or merger, but not the word blending. The words consolidation and merger sound too “corporate business world” for many in the church. We chose the word blending because congregations are like families. In today’s world where divorced or widowed families remarry, the new family becomes known as a blended family. In a blended family, new patterns of relationship have to be established but the individual members of the separate families maintain their character and identity while moving toward a new formation of identity. Thus we use the word blending to characterize what the church is about. But, when developing the legal actions and legal documents, we believe it important that you use the word merger or consolidation.

It is hoped that this material will help planners in the process of achieving effective ministry through blending ministries.

The case studies may provide ideas about organizing for a blending of ministries. The Division for Outreach also stands ready to provide the synod or its congregations counsel in this process.
INTRODUCTION

The Synod Bishops asked the Division to develop a resource booklet to help congregations considering blending of ministries. They realized that following the blendings of ministries that led to the creation of the ELCA that many local congregations would warrant consideration of blendings of ministries.

The Case Studies in this booklet include a variety of opportunities that led to blending of ministries. Some of these are:

- A refocus for mission.

- A blending of ministries to achieve multicultural inclusiveness.

- A blending of ministries of strong congregations in order to be a more effective voice in the community.

- A matter of survival.

- An opportunity for a more strategic location for ministry.

- A desire for cooperation in some programming of ministry

- A combining of strengths and an overcoming of weakness in ministry.

- A change in style.

- A new focus on persons who are not now being served.

- A reaffirmation of each congregation’s ministry.

The Bishops recognized that many blending of ministries were under consideration. They wanted to provide helps as to agenda, areas or issues of concern and legal forms for final decisions.
In this booklet, these agendas, issues and forms are provided in the helps section. There are also chapters on using a third party consultation helper from the synod and dealing with the potential inter-personal conflict that occurs during the planning and early implementation of a blending of ministries.

Some of the primary issues that will be part of any blending of ministries are:

- How do we care for the staff that may not be retained?
- How will we agree on a pastor?
- How can we bring to the new congregation some of the memorabilia symbols of our congregation?
- How will previous memorabilia be cared for in the new congregation?

Introduction (continued)

One of my early consultations with merging partners decided to take the stained glass windows of the older properties and build a sign board and steeple lighted from within and place the windows in the steeple of the new facility. This gave the whole world a vision of how they came together to create the new congregation. How the planners care for these symbols of the past as they design the future is central to an effective blending of ministries.

The Bishops and this church is committed to the focus that all blending of ministries be a new expression that can provide an effective ministry. People want to join a vision that will make a difference.

We hope that this booklet will be user friendly, sow seeds that might encourage you to consider a blending of ministries in your future. In 1994, we had experienced over 54 blending of ministries since the ELCA came into being. Many of these blending of ministries had three congregations come together to form a new ministry. There have been some congregations that dissolved and
encouraged their members to join remaining congregations in the community. We have found that a blending of ministries generates excitement for mission and will be the corporate push to assure that members will not be lost by being left on their own to find a church.

We encourage you to use these materials and write your own case study so that it might help others in the process of blending of ministries.

Robert S. Hoyt for the Division for Outreac
2. STEPS FOR BLENDING MINISTRIES

The following 24 steps can be used with congregations in exploring the possibility of blending ministries with others.

1. Preliminary exploration of two or more congregations to investigate interest in partnering in a study process that may lead to the blending of ministries. This is an inquiry among leaders of two or more congregations about their interest in this possibility.

2. A team should be appointed by the two or more congregations to develop a joint resolution commonly worded for each congregation to discuss and approve. This resolution should be a request that the congregation participate in a study process leading to the possibility of blending ministries of ________________ congregation and the ________________ congregation.

3. If the church councils pass a formal resolution (No. 2 above) and if required, convene a congregational meeting to ratify that action, then the church council shall notify the other partner congregations of their intent to be in the process.

4. The church council should appoint members of the council and congregation that are appropriate for the study process, once hearing from the other partner congregations of their interest in the blending study process. Those persons should represent both innovative thinking and the traditions of the congregations and be available to serve on the various sub-committees necessary for preparation for a blending agreement. Those representatives should be from the church council leadership, the programmatic areas of the congregations’ ministry, and the pastoral leadership.

5. The synod should be notified of the intent of congregations to study this possibility and request a synod staff person to help coordinate and/or lead the process or appoint a third party to facilitate the process.
6. An executive team, made up of the Presidents of each of the congregations and the pastors should meet with the synod staff person or appointed third party consultant to review the process and the preparation necessary before the first meetings of the committees. This might include a request from the Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA to do a demographic study of each congregation’s location and a composite service area. Each congregation should compare their own one, three or five mile radius demographics with a commonly defined service area which includes the two or more congregations. It should also request from the synod office a comprehensive report on congregational demographics over the past five or more years which includes total membership, average worship, regular giving, etc. In addition, it would be appropriate at this time that the congregational council, the pastor, other elected leaders and a random sampling of members utilize the Assessment Tool for Ministry Readiness and compile the responses so that the two or more congregations can see the commonalities and differences they have toward the goals for ministry.

7. The compiling of data and readiness for presentation of each partner’s ministry should be cared for by a team from each congregation.

8. The first planning retreat should include provision for displaying the information from each congregation about their ministry and provide for time to build team work between various members of each congregation with other comparable members from the other congregations. These small groups should participate in a variety of team building exercises in order to learn how to work together before they enter into the task of developing a future design for the ministry. The team should be put together around the following topics and have representatives from each congregation on each team:

- Constitutional Committee
- Worship Committee
- Congregational Program Committee
- Stewardship/Budget Committee
- Evangelism Outreach Committee
- Community Service Committee
• Fellowship and Community Building
• Property and Facilities Committee

Each committee should be formed with representatives from each congregation. They should first go through the team building exercises before they begin their tasks and assignments.

The Executive Committee made up the congregational presidents and pastors should meet prior to the retreat with the consultant from the synod to determine the scope of the first assignment to each of the sub-committees. Such an assignment might be simply to review how your congregation operates in these areas with each other. It might also include a projection into the future that if we were blended as one ministry, what would we want the new congregation to be like. This is a possibility thinking type discussion, not a final plan.

At the end of the retreat, a time line should be established when and how often the committees will meet and what they are to prepare before the second retreat.

9. The Executive Committee should meet with the synod consultant to review the reports prior to the convening of a second retreat. At that meeting, they shall plan the agenda for the second retreat.

10. Convene a second retreat providing time for reports from the committees. A plenary discussion period about the reports should then occur at this second retreat. After discussion, a resolution should be developed and approved by the leaders from the congregations to take a similar worded resolution back to each of the congregations as to whether or not their congregation would commit to proceeding with a blending of ministry.

The scope and degree of that blending shall be determined in the formation of the resolution. For instance, it may suggest that the congregation approve proceeding with a full blending of the ministries of the congregations, or it could suggest that certain areas of cooperation be identified where congregations would work together cooperatively but
not blend the totality of their ministry.

11. Each congregation’s council would review the resolution document and approve or reject it. If necessary, a full vote of the congregational members to proceed should be scheduled.

12. The executive committee from the congregations meeting with the synod consultant would review the congregational actions and proceed with a plan in response to the vote.

13. If the congregations approved blending of ministry or other forms of cooperative ministry, then the executive committee would design a third retreat where discussion on recommended actions would take place.

14. Prior to the third retreat, the committees developed at the first retreat would then be given an assignment from the executive committee to develop a proposed common constitution and specific programs for worship, education, fellowship, building use, etc. The committees would be asked to meet and develop their proposed plans prior to the third retreat. The executive committee’s charge to the committee will be clear as to the objective of what they are to produce.

15. The executive committee will meet to review the committee reports and recommendations with the synod consultant to devise the agenda for the third retreat. They shall also serve as a committee on future staffing and prepare a proposal for the retreat on staffing.

16. At the third retreat, the reports will be given in both a written and oral manner and discussed by all committee members from the congregations. This discussion is in plenary with the whole body participating as one unit. The whole body shall develop a joint resolution following the discussion as to the next steps for the congregations. A typical resolution would include an action by each congregation to vote for the blending of ministry with the prescribed suggestions and the approval of constitutions and actions concerning property and staff. They shall establish a time frame for the blending of the
ministry. The executive committee of the congregations with the synod consultant will act as a staff review team and plan for the staff needs of the congregation that will be blended. If blending is only a cooperation of programs, then the executive team will also review the staff needs for that form of cooperation and either coop existing staff or identify the need for additional staff to carry out those functions.

17. The executive committee at the third retreat shall be assigned a responsibility of bundling the reports and documents together in a formal report for each congregation with the formal resolution recommended by third retreat and bring that to each of the congregation’s congregational council and congregational meeting for discussion and action. In this step, we are recommending that the executive committee be present at each congregation’s council and congregational meeting along with the synod consultant.

18. The congregations will vote to blend or not blend their ministries.

19. The executive committee will collect the actions and inform each congregation of the total actions.

20. If the blending of ministry recommends the sale of property and/or the purchase of property, the executive committee may contact the Division for Outreach and the Mission Investment Fund for assistance in real estate purchase and building development.

21. The executive committee shall be responsible for designing a celebration event for the merger of the congregations’ ministries. It may assign to the Worship Committee the responsibility to design a worship service and to the Fellowship Committee a reception for this celebration. The synod bishop or his or her representative should be asked to preach at the first service of the blended ministry and to install the intended called pastor to that ministry. If the blending takes place prior to the calling of a new pastor, then the synod bishop should be invited to return to the congregation at the first available time after a new pastor has accepted the call so he or she may be installed by the synod bishop.
22. New building facilities and/or the use of the existing facilities should be part of the overall plan with a special care for maintaining the heritage of the past and the clarity of direction for the goals of the future.

23. Each of the committees that work on the steps toward blending of the ministry should review the community demographics, the congregational demographics, and the ministry readiness data in order to plan for the goals and objectives of the ministry and assure that they are reaching out to unchurched people in the community as part of their mission responsibility. Their presentations should reflect the goal priorities of the people for the new ministry. Reports should be given with objective language stating the intent of the program, facility or staff. The Assessment Tool could again be used by the blended ministry in order to help facilitate this goal setting process.

24. Approximately six months after the merger, it would be recommended that the leadership of the new congregation which has intentionally maintained a balance of leadership from each of the congregations be asked to again take the ministry readiness assessment tool. From that information, an annual plan for ministry and mission should be developed with the goals for the next year being established and a budget prepared for the fulfillment of those goals, include the volunteer hours, staff time and financial needs for the achievement of each goal. By focusing on the future, and building from the expectations of this leadership, the congregation will be well on its way toward establishing its new identity and mission.
3. PROCEDURES CONCERNING RELATIONSHIPS OF CONGREGATIONS IN PROCESS OF BLENDING OF MINISTRIES

POLICY REFERENCE: *Steps for Merger or Consolidation of Congregations by Lowell Almen and PO 2.10*

**Summary**

The Division for Outreach is expected to participate with synods in the decisions for relocating congregations that are blended ministries in order that the former community and the new community can be effectively reached with the Gospel by this church. Any blended ministries should contribute to the fulfillment of the synod strategy for mission.

**Constitutional Mandate**

Synods have a responsibility to plan for and implement a mission strategy for new congregations and redevelopment of existing congregations (S6.03e2) and the synod council shall approve all blending ministries upon the recommendation of the synod bishop (9.53.d) and where relocation is involved be in consultation with the Division for Outreach in determining where congregations of this church shall be developed (16.11.c.91a2). The Division may offer services to congregations for first unit construction and services to congregations relocating. Those services may include both program assistance from the Division and the loan services of the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) (6.11.c.91f2).

**General Considerations**

A congregation may want to consider blending ministries in order to enhance its ministry. Two principles should guide the congregation’s considerations:

1. **Mission Purpose**

   Blending ministries should be undertaken to strengthen the ministries of the congregations, not as a defensive tactic for avoiding ministry to a changing community. Consideration should be
given to the current local neighborhood and its needs for the ministry of the Lutheran Church. Concern should center, not only on the current membership or leadership of the congregations desiring to blend their ministries, but upon the current and proposed site populations, the needs and potential for ministry in each place, and for any members who might not go along with the blending of ministries.

2. Interdependent Decision Making:

Blending ministries is a concern of the congregation; the synod; neighboring congregations; the cluster, coalition, or conference; and the churchwide organization, particularly the Division for Outreach. All partners need to reach a consensus. Ministries of neighboring congregations of other denominations also need to be taken into account.

Process

A congregation must initiate inquiry with the synod bishop and may seek counsel from the mission director about blending ministries on their own initiative or may be asked to consider blending ministries by the synod (outreach committee) through the development of the synod strategy for mission. Once two or more congregations begin to consider blending ministries, they shall request from the ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation or an equivalent source, the demographic data for their present service areas and for any potential service area of their relocation.

The mission director working with the congregational leadership shall review the congregational data and the community data for both the present and future service areas. Through a planning process with the congregations involved, it will be determined whether blending ministries is appropriate and fits into the overall strategy of the synod for mission outreach.

An agreement shall be reached as to the appropriate use of resources from the sale of any existing property and the purpose of the new property. It is understood that church assets shall be committed to the continuing mission of this church.

In all of the above, the role of the mission director from the Division and the building consultant
from MIF is one of consultation to both the synod and the congregation. The leadership given by
the mission director in planning with the congregation and the synod outreach committee will be
considered part of the responsibilities of the Division in this process.

The synod outreach committee and/or synod council shall evaluate the proposal prepared by the
congregation for blending ministries and as to how it contributes to the fulfillment of the synod
strategy for mission. Upon review of these documents, the synod council shall approve or deny the
blending of ministries.

The synod staff and/or the mission director shall assist the congregation in developing a program
design for ministry in the existing or new location. There will be a special emphasis on outreach to
the people not yet served in that community in order to assure that this ministry is not simply a
blending of members but rather blending for effective evangelism of the new area.

The Division for Outreach and the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) may make available either
programmatic grants or counsel and/or loans for the blending ministries. The Operations staff of
MIF will evaluate the existing or potential site area and may assist the congregation in the purchase
of the land and initiate design of new buildings. Normally, the land will be purchased by the
congregation with a loan provided by the MIF. Agreement as to the appropriate interest rate and
the length of time before the congregation will build on this land will be determined as part of the
purchase agreement. The interest rate for new loans shall be similar to the interest rates new
mission congregations. The congregation may choose to go to a private lender for the purchase of
land and arrange for its own mortgage without the MIF.

The Division for Outreach may grant program money to the blended ministries congregation for
additional staff to evangelize the new community. If the congregation is planning on developing a
totally new staff, the Division may assist the congregation in the selection of staff appropriate to the
new ministry.

Generally, the involvement of the Division in blending of ministries will be limited to three years, the
first year in pre-planning for the potential blending, the second year implementation of the blending,
and finally in the third year adjusting the program to fulfill the synods objectives in the blending.
4. WHY USE A THIRD PARTY CONSULTANT

The Division for Outreach has often been called upon by synods to help two or three congregations consider a blending of ministries. Synod staff are often asked to help the process in a similar way. Where congregations enter into discussions about their possible future together, they have found that have a Process Leader who is neutral to the partners has helped the process move toward effective decisions. Either a synod staff person or a Mission Director from the Division for Outreach or someone trained in this role can be a Process Leader.

What should you ask of your process consultant? Three functions are central: leadership, fact finding and arbitration.

**Leadership**

By having the process consultant lead the process at the beginning, it enables the principle parties to not compete for leadership while allowing the natural leadership to emerge. The focus on mission and the future enables leaders to be selected who will help fulfill the emerging mission and goals rather than impose leadership of former organizations whose purpose and goals may differ from the new design. As a plan of action and the infrastructure of the new ministry emerges, leaders will be picked from those who wish to be a part of the new ministry. The blended entity will be the place of authority for the election of leadership. This helps avoid competition or compromise and trade off.

The Process Leader can also give direction to the process knowing sequentially what needs to be accomplished. This will help the order or flow of agenda.

The Process Leader should also have the ear of the Bishop of the synod and make regular and timely reports to the Bishop of the progress and stages of development. If a blending of ministries is considering a relocation, then the synod council or other committee must give permission for the move.
There are basically three general strategies of merging two or more congregations. One involves careful planning focusing on the shape or form of the new model of ministry. The second simply folds the participants together electing people to common boards and where there are unique programs continuing then in the new structure. This method may create future tensions where different expectations have not been worked out before the program begins. The third model is a blending of ministry where the stronger partner basically invites the weaker partners to join in their program and future leadership would be chosen from the total membership. The Process Leader can be the advocate for shared leadership in the future in any of these models.

The Process Leader needs to also be a researcher and fact finder. Certain data of past histories of the merging partners may not be remembered by the current leadership. In one blending of ministries, it was found that the partners had previously been one church but in 1915 split to be two congregations, one speaking English, one speaking German. As time passed in the blending of ministries process, the two began to distrust each other although there was no collective memory of why the original separation had taken place. Once the Process Leader discovered the reason for the split and pointed out that they both now speak English, they began to see the foolishness of remaining separate. This new information helped achieve a readiness for the blending of the ministries.

The Process Leader may from time to time be an arbitrator between the parties. Often congregations are concerned to care for their existing staff. The Process Leader can work with the staff and the synod to find good solutions for future employment. Secondly, property can be evaluated through the use of the Mission Investment Fund’s building consultants who are capable of giving an objective assessment of property. The Department for Research and Evaluation of the ELCA can also give objective data about the demographics of the communities, new locations and the congregations. This objective data will help in the process of working through misunderstandings and distrust. The Process Leader is committed to building understanding and trust between the partners. The Process Leader can also help the partners be accountable to their decisions. The Process Leader is better positioned to call the leaders of the merging or blending ministries to see if they are prepared and ready for action.
The final contribution a process consultant can offer is in arbitrating when decisions need to be made. Both parties may have different time lines, one needing decisions quickly for their survival while the other wanting to prepare their members slowly to gain ownership of the ideas. By setting a date in the future, allowing for progressive levels of commitment, the integrity and identity of the partners can be affirmed. There would be time to thoroughly discuss issues and achieve consensus without rushing judgements. Sensitivity to timing needs is a responsibility of the Process Leader.

There are a number of activities not directly related to the tasks of blending ministries that may also be helpful to build understanding and hospitality. These agenda items could also be advocated by the Process Leader.

Finally the Process Leader can adapt the suggested forms and legal notices to conform with state law and church polity. Documents or final actions should be registered with the synod, the Division for Outreach and the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA.

We encourage the use of a third party process consultant. The Division is preparing a list of persons in networks who could assist in this process -- synod staff and Division staff will be trained to help congregations in this process.
5. POTENTIAL INTER-PERSONAL CONFLICTS DURING BLENDING OF MINISTRIES

Bringing two churches together in a new expression can be like bringing two families together in a marriage. No matter how much a couple of leaders might love one another, they come from different traditions and different world views of what is the right way of doing things. Therefore, it is recommended that the planning process include time to get to know each other with planned joint activities. Sufficient time to study together all aspects of ministry that will be part of the new expression is the key. Only when objective analysis and shared goal setting and consensus on decisions occurs can you expect good relationships.

There are both formal and informal leaders and actions required in a blending of ministries. Often, informal leaders who are known as permission givers do not sit on boards or committees acting for the congregation. Visits with these leaders, sharing progress and intents and getting their input will make the formal process more effective. You will need their support.

You can expect that some people will not join the new expression. Some of these people will not join because they were already disengaging from the partner churches and will use the blending of ministries as an excuse not to join. Still others might fear the loss of influence or power they had experienced and do not want to be part of something they cannot control. Still others might objectively disagree with the direction of the planned ministry.

The care given by the leadership that supports the blending of ministries to those who do not support the blending of ministries will live with the emerging institution for years. Exit interviews, special care to assure transfers to other ministries and special care to keep a concerned list to be served by the blended church with those who will not find a church home, will keep the relationship open and promote understanding.

Remember, in a blending of ministries, we are either closing one tradition or another or melding traditions. The carefully planned blending of ministries might even create a new way to implement a program. In each of these methodologies, someone is bound to say "that’s not the way we used to do it." Building into the program ample time to teach how traditions are changing and why new
directions are necessary is essential. It is also necessary to care for those who become upset with the change. One way to demonstrate care is to listen and point out that what is now being done is linked to their past. The same values and ultimate purpose do not change.

We encourage the newly blended ministry to be cautious for at least five years after the blending of ministries to guarantee that representatives from all the merging parties are on the church council and each of the committees.

Eventually, a new identity common to all will emerge. Finding ways to celebrate often the unity and new identity will help overcome these tensions. The importance of the blended ministry stressing its new mission is that all the members, including new ones, will focus on the future identity and not the past. Still, it may be helpful to celebrate the partners’ histories. One blended ministry still identified significant 75 year anniversaries of the predecessors and kept a picture gallery of past pastors which had served either of the predecessors.

What this boils down to is respecting the history and contributions of the partners both during the planning for a new blended ministry and after the blending of ministries is complete. Pointing back toward the history of the partners may be just what is needed to focus on the future mission of the ministry.

Today the church leaders may be asked to do in faith something very similar to what the forbearers of the partners did when they stepped out in faith to start their ministries. Wherever one can use history to support today’s actions, the better the response.

Finally, some people will need to be encouraged to find another congregation as this blended ministry’s direction and ministry no longer meets their needs and dreams. Helping people find another place will free this ministry to be about its mission.
6. CARE FOR THE EXISTING STAFF AND PASTOR

Often a stumbling block to a blending of ministries is the lay concern for the care of the existing pastor and staff of their congregation. Members realize that with the change in structure their pastor may not be called by the new blended entity. Often they try to find a solution to the issue without utilizing the churchwide network. They try to find a financial solution to the continuing employment of the pastor either with the new congregation or with some kind of other expression and utilize the asset value of the property to establish an endowment for the pastor.

This is not a legal way of solving the problem. As a not-for-profit corporation, congregations have agreed in their constitutions that no individual can profit from the sale of property of the congregation. Not-for-profit corporations can own property but they own it as a group. If they choose to sell the property they do so as a group and dissolve their corporation in the process of creating a blending of ministries. The total asset value can go to the new congregation as a result of the blending of ministries or to the synod of the local congregation. The constitution of the ELCA is clear that the synod will commit the asset value of any property received for mission development within the synod. The Division for Outreach, if it has sponsored or supported the congregational development in the past, may also have a claim for value of their past contributions against the asset value if the congregation dissolves. If the congregation leaves the ELCA, the congregation would have an obligation to repay the Division for Outreach for past support. Those funds are understood to be deposited with the synod and to be committed again for mission.

If a congregation tries to establish a foundation whose sole purpose would be the continuing endowment of a pastoral position when the pastor is no longer serving a congregation, they are dangerously close to creating a situation where the government may step in and declare that illegal.

Therefore, we are recommending that if there is a concern for the continuing employment of pastors and staff as a result of a blending of ministries, that the synod be contacted early on in the process so that the pastor’s name can be brought before the mobility process within the synod and beyond so that a meaningful opportunity for employment can be offered prior to the blending of ministries.
It may also be possible that in planning for the new ministry the congregation that is being formed might have a multiple staff position available for any or all of the pastoral staff. Generally, this is harder to achieve than might be obvious. Bringing two leaders from former congregations into a new entity requires at least some understanding of the dynamics of leadership and the role of senior and subordinate staff. Co-pastors need to have clear definitions of jobs within the congregation so that they do not step on each others toes as they execute the office of ministry.

These considerations for the proper design of the staff component of the blended ministry require major planning including notifying the synod and seeking the synod’s help in bringing resolutions to these concerns. The synod is equipped through the call process to bring candidate's names before appropriate openings and to refer to other synods, if necessary, a candidate for possible inclusion in their call process.
7. GUIDELINES / STEPS IN BLENDING OF MINISTRIES’ AGREEMENTS

Discussion/Initial Steps in the Process

A. The appointing of a study committee. (Make up is to be decided by the church councils.) The convener should be a staff person from the judicatory.

B. Possible questions for discussion:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages to the congregations merging?
2. What is the nature of the ministry that will be carried out by the blended of ministries?
3. What is to be the primary geographical area of responsibility for outreach to the unchurched and service to community?
4. What are the assets and liabilities that each congregation brings to the blending of ministries?
   - building and property
   - endowments
   - cash accounts
   - leadership
   - ministry programs
   - staff
   - membership
   - memorials
   - debts
   - mortgages
5. What are the legal requirements of this state for two non-profit corporations blend together?
6. What expenses are involved in the legal and attorney fees that would lead to a blending of ministries?
7. What guidance and assistance will be provided by the synod (judicatory) and what services are available from churchwide agencies, such as the Division for Outreach and The Mission Investment Fund (real estate, fund raising, building consultation and evaluation, outreach training, program planning).

Possibilities for Blending Ministries

A. Absorption (one or more existing non-profit corporations simply become a part of an already existing church)

B. Blending Ministries (two or more non-profit corporations form a new corporation, thus making a new legal entity)

C. Articles of Partnership (declaration that it is their intent to become a simple entity at the time of the formation of the new church)
AREAS FOR DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT

1. Name

2. Effective Blending of Ministries Date

3. Congregational Vote to Blend the Ministries - New Name, Organization

4. Members

5. Affiliation, Benevolence Levels of Commitment

6. Pastor

7. Church Council

8. Constitution and Bylaws

9. Facilities

10. Worship

11. Organist

12. Christian Education for Youth and Adults

13. Stewardship

14. Evangelism

15. Program Offerings for Adults and Youth

16. Social Ministry Programs
17. Furnishings and Equipment

18. Financial Considerations

19. Foundations and Endowments

20. Books, Records and Archives

Note: Approved Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA states:

Article 4, Section 6: "Should the congregation desire to relocate or blend with another ministry, it shall secure the advice and approval of the synod before any commitments to that end are entered into."
8. A SYNOD STRATEGY FOR BLENDING OF MINISTRIES

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, under the leadership of Bishop Paul Blom, initiated a variety of explorations into cooperative ministry. They created the Rural Ministry Discussion Steering Committee which has encouraged a number of their rural congregations to engage in discussions and long range planning that may lead toward future blending of ministries. These have been done with a consideration for strengthening congregational witness in mission and ministry in their community. They have seriously dealt with an analysis of congregational culture that would move away from a service club mentality which focuses inward to a mission minded church of God’s people focused outward.

There are major points in the preparation for the future that need to be considered by all congregations. Congregations need to deal with the technological advances that are empowering individuals and communities and changing the type of program and workers needed. Congregations need to realize that all communities are part of a global community while avoiding the promotion of our local club. Eighty-one percent of Texans now live in metropolitan areas and congregations in rural areas will need to consider blending their ministries if they are to have a future. While rural areas have been losing population, Texas has also experienced an overall slow down in its growth.

A major shift in the Texas situation is that the population growth expected will be primarily among Hispanics and Asians. The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod has focused on the development of leadership as a prerequisite for the future.

While many congregations have experienced holding their own; they know that if they have less than 250 baptized members with average worship attendance below 80; and the average age of their congregation continues to increase; then it is time to consider looking toward other congregations as possible candidates for blending ministries.

On November 12, 1995, five congregations came together to share in worship. It was their first attempt at doing worship together. They had been conducting confirmation and youth ministry previously.
There are other experiences of blending ministries which has been encouraged by the synod. Two suburban southeastern Houston congregations came together as Peace in Pasadena which also sponsors an Hispanic ministry. There are four other congregations on the southeast side of Houston that have been talking together about possible future relationships. A number of other congregations have begun to plan for joint confirmation and youth ministry in order to build the bridges toward a relationship that might lead to future blending of ministries and stronger mission.

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod has begun to realize that a major effort for future staff involvement will be in bringing congregations together so that they can have the strength necessary for a dynamic ministry in the future.

The synod is considering a strategic move toward the planning for possible blending of ministries. They believe their congregations need to look at six factors that will influence their future. They are:

1. **Population mobility.** People appear to be willing to travel greater distances than ever before for work, leisure or personal activities. The prior concept of a neighborhood parish was formed by a less mobile society. It now appears that people will travel greater distances, being drawn to a specific service offered by a congregation rather than attending because of neighborhood loyalty.

2. **Pastoral compensation.** Congregations under 250 contributing members will have or are having increasing difficulty in adequately supporting a full time pastor. At the same time, pastors are learning how to share ministry with laity so that the service of care for members can be multiplied by the use of a variety of lay persons assisting the pastor in ministry. Therefore, larger congregations are possible even with fewer staff.

3. **Changes in membership.** Congregations must meet an ever wider range of needs. People have a diverse range of concerns and no one pastor or single staff can respond to all of those needs. Therefore, larger organizations seem to be needed to employ multiple staff and recruit a diverse skilled set of volunteers to serve the diversity of concerns.
4. **Changing levels of support.** Congregations certainly need funds but they also need volunteers, teachers, leaders and evangelists, etc. Laity today appear to want to be engaged in more significant service in their voluntary efforts than ever before. There expectation of making a difference in society through their volunteer work require that we ask more of them in serious forms of commitment.

5. **Congregational proximity.** Many congregations in our urban areas or in our rural areas were initiated when travel was at a speed of 25 miles an hour. People would walk six blocks to a street car or would ride a horse for a few miles. Today’s automobile and subsequent transportation systems, travels at speeds that enable a person to cover 15 miles or more in the time that it took them to travel one to three miles. With the automobile, people have gone church shopping, travelling as many as 25 miles from their home to find a fit for their needs and services.

6. **Congregational age.** Congregations have a long standing presence in their location which makes for a deep rooted set of traditions and long standing historical practices. Because of this, newcomers to the community find it more difficult to break into the structure of the congregation. New ministries find that they can reach out more effectively to unchurched people. Existing congregations, if they go through a process of blending ministries, may find that the cultural changes enables them to become more open to the newcomers of the community. Congregational age is a major deterrent to growth unless it finds a way to become "multicultural" and break out of their set patterns of life.

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod has asked all of their congregations to study the impact of these six elements before they develop their plans for the future. Each congregation needs an action plan for their future mission strategy. Some will develop plans on their own. Others will see the validity of planning with others for blending of ministries. The synod staff and the Division for Outreach staff will assist congregations through this process.
9. ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MINISTRY READINESS AND MISSION POTENTIAL

Your response to this questionnaire will help leaders plan for the future. There are 42 goal statements that a congregation may have. For each goal statement you are asked for your opinion about how important the goal should be for your congregation and how effective the congregation is in achieving this goal. In the second section the evaluation shifts as to how important you feel the goal should be for the congregation and then how well do you do in implementing this goal in your daily life.

Section I

This section measures the goals of a congregation. The left side establishes the importance of the goal for your congregation, the right side will measure the effectiveness of the congregation in doing its ministry.

A 6 is extremely important (left side) or effective (right side), 5 very important or very effective, 4 important or effective, 3 is somewhat important or somewhat effective, 2 slightly important or effective or not so good at implementing, and 1 is unimportant or poor in effectiveness.

In your view, how important should this goal be for the congregation?  
Our congregation(s);

6 5 4 3 2 1  A. Helps members develop faith in God that gives them hope for the future.  
1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1  B. Leadership helps create a feeling of trust among members.  
1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1  C. Has a clear plan to reach unchurched people.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
D. Demonstrates concern for God’s gifts of the earth and its resources.

E. Provides a balance of reverence before God and personal warmth in worship.

F. Trains members to immediately call on visitors to our congregation to build relationships.

G. Strengthens family life and inter-personal relationships.

H. Bible studies are often held and apply to daily life.

I. Worship leadership involves laity responsibility.
J. Members serve the needs of the oppressed and addicted in the community (such as the poor, oppressed, divorced, alcoholics and handicapped).

K. Members reflect the power of the Gospel in their daily life and work.

L. Members help each other experience God’s grace and forgiveness.

M. Leadership deals with conflict openly and constructively.

N. Worship reaches out to the community with contextual sensitivity.

O. Participates in programs that meet people’s physical and spiritual needs locally and globally (food banks and community development).

P. Celebrates our community and reconciliation in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

Q. Provides support for members during times of stress or crisis.

R. Demonstrates Christian unity with local congregations in joint ministries (such as joint youth ministries or joint worship services).

S. Plans for and participates in the development of a new congregational mission.

T. Sacramental celebration in worship is meaningful and desired often.
U. Nurtures the development of faith, spiritual formation, and Christian values in our members.

V. Members view financial giving as central to Christian life.
Section II

This next section evaluates both the congregations intent and how you are doing in your own effectiveness of ministry. The left side measures your opinion of the importance of this goal for the congregation and the right side measures you effectiveness in implementing this goal in you ministry.

In your view, how important is this goal for your congregation?

6 5 4 3 2 1 AA. Trains members to witness to Christ with people outside of the congregation.

   I share Christ with people outside the congregation.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 BB. Makes full use of each member’s skills and talents.

   The congregation makes full use of my skills and talents.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 CC. Urges members to be active in community organization and social justice issues as a Christian witness.

   I am actively involved in community organizations as a Christian witness.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 DD. Members see themselves as both sinners and forgiven saints.

   I see myself as both sinner and forgiven saint.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 EE. Helps members feel valued as part of this congregation.

   I feel valued as part of this congregation.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 FF. Helps members grow in confidence that God is at work in their lives.

   I have grown in confidence that God is at work in my life.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

6 5 4 3 2 1 GG. Has high expectations for each member’s ministry in the

Mergers and Consolidations
congregation and in the community.
I take responsibility for caring for the congregation’s
and my ministries.

6 5 4 3 2 1  HH. Welcomes people of different ethnic, cultural or life style
backgrounds into our congregational life.
I welcome people of different ethnic, cultural or life style
backgrounds into our congregational life.

6 5 4 3 2 1  II. Understands what is distinctive about the theology of our faith.
I understand what is distinctive about the theology of our
faith.

6 5 4 3 2 1  JJ. Helps members find friends and relationships with others.
I find friends and relationships with others.

6 5 4 3 2 1  KK. Prays often for each other and with others.
I regularly pray for others.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LL.</td>
<td>Members feel free to express their own opinions even when they differ from the majority.</td>
<td>I feel free to express my opinions even when they differ from the majority.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MM.</td>
<td>Works to overcome poverty and injustice in our community.</td>
<td>I work to overcome poverty and injustice in our community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NN.</td>
<td>Live as though salvation is not earned, but a gift from God.</td>
<td>I live as thought salvation is not earned, but a gift from God.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OO.</td>
<td>Helps members meet their emotional and spiritual needs.</td>
<td>I reach out to help others meet their emotional and spiritual needs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP.</td>
<td>Fosters regular devotional reading and personal prayer.</td>
<td>I regularly engage in devotional reading and prayer.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>QQ.</td>
<td>Values our congregation’s connection with the ELCA and its congregations and agencies.</td>
<td>I value my connection with the ELCA and its congregations and agencies.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RR.</td>
<td>Members speak with each other about their faith.</td>
<td>I speak with others about my faith.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>SS.</td>
<td>Shows how Christian beliefs apply to everyday moral and ethical decisions.</td>
<td>I apply Christian beliefs to everyday moral and ethical decisions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT.</td>
<td>Takes time to research the neighborhood and the unchurched population in order to have a planned approach to outreach.</td>
<td>I take time to plan my witness to the unchurched.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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Please answer these additional questions.
1. Are you serving now in an elected position in the congregation, yes no

2. What is your age? Check One:
   ___high school age 24-29  ___66-79
   ___30-39  ___30-44  ___80+
   ___18-23  ___45-65

3. Are you male female?

4. Are you a member, for number of years prospective member visitor?

5. Estimate number of hours you spend in church related activities,
   ___0-1  ___5-10  ___2-4  ___11 or more

6. Estimate the time it takes to go from your home to the church, in minutes:

7. Are you a paid staff person in the church? Yes No, Full Part-Time
INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR SCORING YOU DATA

This sheet is meant to provide graphs and data that will inform congregational leaders about the potential and planned direction of ministry. It can be used by an individual for scoring their responses to the questionnaire and it can also be used to generate summary graphs for both subgroups or the total congregational averages.

It should be noted that in each category:

1. ACTIVE EVANGELISM,
2. ENRICHING PERSONAL FAITH,
3. PRACTICING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP,
4. SERVING MERCY AND JUSTICE,
5. EXPRESSING OUR PARTICULAR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE, AND
6. CREATING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY EQUIPPED FOR LIFE,

we have included seven questions. By adding together the importance, effectiveness and gap score totals of that category, you can determine the relative importance of EACH category in each aspect (importance, etc.) in relationship to the other categories. You should also divide those totals by 7 and place that number in the summary section as the average scores for importance, effectiveness and gap difference and then make a summary graft under the summary scores section. The gap difference will indicate the work that will need to be done to get the performance in line with the congregation’s expectations. You may wish to sharpen the goals in each of the 42 elements and shape them to your context. Each of these categories should be used in developing your plan for future mission action.

Individuals can use the scoring sheets to determine their own graph. They need to transfer the scores to the profile sheet in the columns; Av imp, Av eff, and Gap difference. The individuals who take the survey can record their individual answers in this space, which will make it easier to formulate their graphs. They should then graph their answers in each section placing a dot corresponding to their choices on the graph. Make sure you do only the importance scores first and connect those dots with a solid straight line. Then, place the corresponding effectiveness sores on the graph and connect them with a broken -- straight line. They should make copies of their graph sheets and turn them into the congregational team managing the process so they can build the group and total summaries.
The team managing the questionnaire in the congregation should have a person collect all the questionnaires of the leadership group; by each question, add up the individual scores for each question and divide that number by the number of respondents to get the average score for each question. The left hand columns provide for a place to list these averages. One decimal point is adequate if you do a 4\5 split. The importance scores should be graphed first by placing a dot on each line corresponding to the question and then using a straight line to connect the dots. This will produce a graph showing the relative importance of each goal statement to each other. Then, do the same placing dots on the lines related to the effectiveness score. Now connect these dots using a broken straight line --.

This will enable you to see the difference between what you believe is important for the church to be about and how well the church is performing or you are doing in this area.

A completed profile is offered for illustration as “Exhibit A” at the end of this document. It is not meant to be normative or ideal. The best answers are truthful ones. Only by having truthful data can the congregation plan for their future.

The congregational team will be able to assess the congregational priorities and where they will need to design their future efforts to achieve a ministry that the members expect of the church.

There may be an occasion where the congregation’s effectiveness or your performance exceeds the congregation’s expectation of importance. This might signal the leadership to who could help in a given category or that you may be a person who could help the congregation get that priority accomplished. Or, the priorities may need to change or that the effort in some areas may need to be curtailed. Where the gap between expectation of importance far exceeds the effectiveness (more than one point) then the leadership will need to study what they can do to get the congregation back on track with the members’ expectation.

If the questionnaire is being used by two or more congregations to help them prepare for a blending of their ministries, the leadership will have important data to help it plan for the future of the merged ministry. Dealing with perceptions of what people think is important will help the new ministry be more effective.

You will note that in each category there are goals from both the first and second section. The second section is numbered by a double letter. If the graph shows higher or lower effectiveness on the right side, it means that our members are performing as individuals better than they believe the congregation on the whole is doing. If the left side is higher in the effectiveness scores, it means that there is a general
feeling the congregation is doing better than your individual members feel they are doing in ministry. Skill development in those areas would be a must learning. If the members are doing better than the congregation, then the leadership will need to recruit those members who have high effectiveness to be the trainers of others with those skills.

There is a wealth of information gathered by the congregation that should help them in their planning for mission in the future. This is only the beginning.
## 1. ACTIVE EVANGELISM EFFORTS

### Importance score _____ Effectiveness score _____ Gap difference _____

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<tr>
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<th>Av Imp</th>
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C. Has a clear plan to reach unchurched people.

F. Trains members to call on visitors to build relationships.

S. Participates in the development of a new mission.

AA. Shares Christ with people outside the congregation.

HH. Welcomes people of different backgrounds.

TT. Researches the community and its unchurched population.

## 2. ENRICHING PERSONAL FAITH

### Importance score _____ Effectiveness score _____ Gap difference _____

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<th>Av Imp</th>
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A. Develop faith in God that gives hope for the future.
H. Bible studies offered often and apply to daily life.

FF. Grow in confidence that God is at work in their lives.

PP. Fosters regular devotional reading & personal prayer.

RR. Members speak with each other about their faith.

SS. Christian beliefs apply to everyday decisions.
3. **PRACTICING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

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<th>Importance score</th>
<th>Effectiveness score</th>
<th>Gap difference</th>
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**B.** Creates a feeling of trust among members.

**M.** Deals with conflict openly and constructively.

**V.** Financial giving as central to Christian life.

**BB.** Full use of each member’s skills and talents.

**GG.** Has high expectations for each member’s ministry.

**LL.** Free to express their own opinions even when differ.

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4. **SERVING MERCY AND JUSTICE**

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<tr>
<th>Importance score</th>
<th>Effectiveness score</th>
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**D.** Concern for God’s gifts of the earth and its resources.
J. Serve the oppressed and addicted in the community.

O. Meet people’s physical and spiritual needs.

R. Demonstrated Christian unity with other congregations.

CC. Active in community organization and social justice.

MM. Works to overcome poverty and injustice.
5. EXPRESSING OUR PARTICULAR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Importance score</th>
<th>Effectiveness score</th>
<th>Gap difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K. Reflects the power of the Gospel in their daily work.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. Celebrates community and reconciliation in sacraments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD. See themselves as both sinners and forgiven saints.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Understands what is distinctive about our theology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NN. Live as if salvation is not earned, but a gift from God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>QQ. Values congregation’s connection with the ELCA.</td>
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6. CREATING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY EQUIPPED FOR LIFE

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<th></th>
<th>Importance score</th>
<th>Effectiveness score</th>
<th>Gap difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Strengthens family life &amp; interpersonal relationships.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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Q. Provides support during times of stress or crisis.

U. Nurtures faith, spiritual formation & Christian values.

EE. Members feel valued as part of this congregation.

JJ. Members find friends and relationships with others.

OO. Helps members meet emotional and spiritual needs.
7. MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

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<th>Importance score</th>
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E. Balance of reverence and personal warmth in worship.

I. Share responsibility with laity in worship.

L. Helps experience God’s grace and forgiveness in worship.

N. Worship reaches out to the community contextually.

T. Eucharistic celebration in worship is meaningful and often.

KK. Prays often for each other in worship.
### SUMMARY PROFILE

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1. Evangelism efforts  
2. Personal faith  
3. Effective leadership  
4. Mercy and justice  
5. Christian heritage  
6. Christian community  
7. Meaningful Worship

**Gap Issues identified**

1. 

2. 

3. 

4.
5.

I am a member ____ for ____ number of years. I am ____male, ____female. I hold an elected office___. I am interested in ____joining the church. I am willing to work on achieving the goals that are important to me____. You may call me at (____) ___-____.

My name is ________________________ (optional)

Please make a copy of this profile and give it to one of the assessment management team members. Thank you for your cooperation.

10. MODELS OF BLENDING MINISTRIES (CASE STUDIES)

MODEL NO. 1 A STRONG EVANGELISM COMMITTED BLENDING

The preliminary discussions between three north side Lutheran congregations in Baltimore led to the idea of a possible blending of ministries. All three had members from both the white and African American communities and all had dwindled to less than 75 persons in worship. The synod contacted a churchwide Division for Outreach staff person to work with these congregations which came from two of the merging church bodies in the ELCA. This person had been a member of one of these congregations 20 years before.

The Division for Outreach staff person arranged to meet with the councils of each church during one visit and got an agreement to elect seven representatives of each church to participate in three two day retreats during the next year. It was understood that each church council and congregation would have the final authority to act on behalf of their own church and that there would be three go/no go votes scheduled during the process. The seven members from each congregation became a 21 member church council for the proposed new church. Each congregation had the opportunity to pick their representatives knowing that one should be focused on administration, one on worship life, one on learning ministry, one on stewardship, one on community justice ministry,
one on evangelism and outreach and the last one on buildings and facilities.

The first retreat focused on team building and getting to know one another. By the end of this retreat the representatives were divided into the seven committees to begin to analyze the needs and expectations for a new church.

At this point, each local congregation was asked to vote a go or no go to continuing the process. Two of the congregations enthusiastically voted to proceed but the third voted to close their congregation and let members go to any congregation. Three of the original seven members from this congregation said they would like to continue but did not have the authority of their now defunct congregation.

The administrative committee met with the Division for Outreach facilitator and decided to create a new "X" congregation to represent the non-members or outreach responders to the new blended ministry. One other person was recruited who was a non-member of any of the congregations but had heard that there was a plan to develop a viable new congregation in the community. This experience became an important element. The 17 members of the "new congregational council" realized that they needed 21 members and began to reach out to new non-members who might be interested in planning for a new church. By the third retreat, they had a complete council. More on this facet later.

The second retreat focused on an assessment of needs of each of the two congregations membership. Surveys both written and telephone had been made asking members to share their concerns and hopes. These were shared at the retreat and initial planning for the ministry was begun by the seven committees.

A progress report was brought back to the two congregations for their go/no go response. Both enthusiastically voted to proceed but one of the congregations was showing some concerns for their pastor and their property. At this congregation, they felt that their property, while needing some repair, was the better property and felt that the new ministry ought to be out of their building. Their pastor was near retirement age but would not be retired before the potential blending of ministries.

The pastor of this church sought counsel from the Division for Outreach representative who in
assessing his skills, needs and interests, suggested that at the point of blending of ministries that he become the interim pastor of the synod during his last years until retirement. The synod was open to this possibility. A financial plan was developed that showed him that he could do this. This released him from being a stumbling block for the congregation in future planning. It also helped the other pastor deal with his future role or expectations in relationship to the ministry. During the process, the retiring interim pastor felt relief and said he was not available. In fact, just before the blending of the ministries, he received a call to a smaller church in the area in which he planned to retire. The second pastor was able to be more aggressive in his desire to be the first called pastor of the blended ministry. Both churches began to trust both pastors for their openness. The second pastor also acknowledged that he was only a candidate and that the new church had to call him if he was to be their pastor.

This began to release the tension of the church that had concerns about the future.

The other church property needed major repairs and was on a crowded city lot. It was a large facility but had serious problems. Since that congregation saw itself as contributing the pastor to the future, members felt released from their need to use their building and began the process of looking for a buyer of the church property.

The first church property needed some repairs. However, fears related to the cost of repairs were overcome when upon realization that the income from the sale of the second property could pay for the repairs of the first property and also leave enough endowment to add a staff person to the blended ministry.

The property committee was assigned to develop a plan of action on the property.

The proposed date of blending of ministries was set six months ahead.

The third retreat met to finalize the planned ministry and made three key recommendations.

1. That the members of the first facility, which would be the final home of the blended ministry, be invited to worship for three months at the facility that was to be sold. This would provide for a chance for all members of the merging congregation to really get to know one another.
It also provided for a three month period where the vacated facility could be repaired.

2. That the council would establish a pastoral search committee to establish criteria for the pastor and a second staff person and open the process allowing for the pastor of the second congregation to be a candidate. They stated their recommendation would be known prior to the third go/no go decision.

3. The evangelism committee recommended that both congregations and the "X" representatives actively recruit new members not for their individual churches but for the future church and that on the Sunday following the individual congregational vote on the blending the ministries, these new members would be the first to join the new church, even before the existing members transferred membership from their respective churches to the new mission.

Each congregation studied the plans for the new ministry for two months while worshiping together.

The pastoral search committee recommended that the pastor of the second facility be called as the first pastor.

The property of the first facility was being repaired and near completion. The second facility was sold to a Baptist Church for over $500,000.
Both congregations voted nearly unanimously to join in a blended ministry taking a new name for the church (All Saints). That symbolized the blending of the ministries of the congregations.

On the organizing Sunday when the new constitution was approved, the members were still worshipping in the second (sold) facility, the first new members’ class was received by the newly elected council as the first members of All Saints. Fifty-four new members were received. The next Sunday, the members left the second facility turning over the property to the Baptists, and together arrived at the first facility, their new home for their first worship service as All Saints. All Saints received the transfers from the previous congregations.

Three factors made this process successful:

1. The congregations were given over a year to plan and make progressive commitments to a blending of ministries which could have been stopped along the way.

2. The committees represented the churches working together rather than one church planning one aspect while another aspect would be planned by the other church setting up a win/lose potential. Both congregations felt they owned the planned new ministry.

3. Active evangelism to new members got the focus off of looking ”at the other congregation on joining us” and toward all joining the new mission. By making the first members the new members, they took on a special role by providing a reception to the transfers on opening worship day. This cemented their place for the new church.

MODEL NO. 2 A MULTICULTURAL BLENDING OF MINISTRIES WITH A NEW INTENTIONAL OUTREACH FOCUS

Background

Incarnation Lutheran Church was formed as a blending of Advent Lutheran Church and Hope/Epiphany Lutheran Church in Chicago, IL in 1972. As the area’s Hispanic population
increased rapidly over the next few years, an Hispanic ministry was initiated under the direction of Pastor Keith Forni. In 1991, the pastor resigned to take a new call. Roughly, two-thirds of the 150 members were of Hispanic origin and worship attendance averaged 67 persons at two Sunday services, one in English and one in Spanish. The congregation was noted for its heavy community involvement, with an active Head Start program, food pantry and other social services and the Nobel Neighbors Community Organization (named for the grade school which is across the street from the church), which sponsored neighborhood vigils and other activities to combat the rising level of gangs, drugs and violence.

When a new pastor was called to succeed Pastor Forni in August, 1991, several factors coincided to place the ministry on less stable footing. First, the financial picture became shaky. A decreasing level of churchwide/partnership support, coupled with a decline in the financial base of the congregation (the older, Anglo population), made it difficult to cope with the rising costs of supporting a full-time pastor and maintaining the building. More time had to be devoted to raising funds and cutting expenses; and less on developing the ministry. Secondly, a lawsuit against the church by a Hispanic member further complicated matters and he left the church along with several other Hispanic families. Third, the neighborhood was undergoing several changes, among them an increase in the African American population, and a rising level of gang activity. Since many of the members, including the pastor and his family, lived outside the neighborhood, these changes caused them to question the long-term viability of the congregation and whether or not the current, bi-lingual focus should be continued.

When Pastor Forni’s successor resigned to take a new call in January of 1993, those involved with the ministry at Incarnation were asking many questions. Among them were whether the ministry should be directed primarily at the growing African-American population, whether the church should simply sell the building and close the ministry, or whether they should try to re-direct their efforts in some other way. In consultation with synodical leadership and after several months of a "maintenance" interim pastor, a new interim pastor arrived who was bi-lingual in Spanish and English and an African-American pastor was contracted for 20 and 10 hours of pastoral service a week. These two were to explore these questions and give recommendations for the future direction of the ministry at Incarnation Lutheran Church.

Summer Mission Project
Beginning on June 1, 1993, the new pastoral team, Pastor Erickson and Pastor Washington, begin to explore how the ministry at Incarnation could be revitalized. The first phase consisted of interviews of members, leaders of the community, and the residents of the area. The second phase of the project involved changing the worship pattern. The members had become accustomed to one, bi-lingual service on Sunday mornings. Beginning the second Sunday of July, the first service on Sunday became English only, increasingly using elements of an African-American worship style, including hymns from the gospel hymnal "Lead Me, Guide Me." Attendance at this service fluctuated between a low of 12 and a high of 51, with the average steadily rising through the summer to August's average attendance of 32. The worshipping congregation roughly consisted of a group of 40% Anglo, 40% Hispanic, and 20% African-American. Many Hispanics, even those with limited English skills, prefer to worship at the early service, with the result that the second Spanish service saw very limited participation.

The third phase of the project involved a summer day camp program for area children, held the first two weeks of August. This was the third consecutive year such a program had been held at Incarnation, and many of the children who registered had participated in previous years. Enrollment in the program was 46 children, 50% African American, 40% Hispanic, and 20% other. The program was open to children ages 5-12 and run by the staff of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center. Each of the families in the program was visited by either Pastor Washington or Pastor Erickson, with the result that 15 children attended the closing celebration at worship on August 15, and four different families were present at worship for the first time.

The final phase of the summer outreach program took place on Sunday, August 22, when Incarnation held its first revival at 3:00 p.m. Invitations went out to area churches and flyers were distributed in the neighborhood, and 85 people attended an outdoor service of singing, preaching and praying in English and Spanish, many of whom had never worshiped at Incarnation before.

**September - December Activities**

As the summer brought a renewed spirit to Incarnation, this spirit continued throughout the remainder of the year. The two pastors concluded that a Lutheran presence in the neighborhood of Incarnation is viable and needed.
While several Hispanic families remained active through the transitions, many others waited on the fringes to see what would happen. As the pastor visited the Hispanic families of the summer fun children and other Hispanics connected with the church, many asked him if he was going to stay permanently. The comments which the other pastor received while visiting unchurched families in the community demonstrated a clear potential for increasing the African-American presence at Incarnation. While ministering to such distinct racial groups was believed to be significant challenge, it was also believed that the church could and should play a role in modeling inter-racial cooperation and harmony for the community.

New Hope Lutheran Church

A pastor was called to New Hope Lutheran Church in June of 1992 by a joint call committee of Lutheran Family Mission and New Hope Church. Lutheran Family Mission had originally contracted to contribute $15,000 per year for this new ministry.

This pastor’s call began October of 1992 and worshiping attendance quickly increased from 4 - 7 adults and 15 children to over 50 in a short span of time. It is believed that the activities which led to this growth (other than the Holy Spirit) were:

1. aggressive visiting in the community;
2. high visibility in the community;
3. Baptismal Festival; and
4. New Member Miracle Sunday.

Other activities which contributed to the growth were Women’s Day, Men’s Day, Youth Sunday and a successful Saturday Christian Church School held on the fourth Saturday of every month with music, class, lunch and a field trip.
Concerning Social Justice, we stepped out on faith and held a Conference for Caregivers of children whose parents were either incarcerated or drug abusers and attracted over 100 resource persons and Caregivers. This group continued to meet once a month. A trip to Iowa to help flood victims empowered the congregation to know that God had blessed them with gifts to give their brothers and sisters in need.

The inability of Lutheran Family Mission to keep its commitment of support for this join ministry began to inhibit the ministry and the possibility of any long-term planning by New Hope’s members.

When the synod asked New Hope and Incarnation to consider the prospect of blending ministries (which would eliminate New Hope’s dilemma of funds and Incarnation’s dilemma of worshiping attendance) both churches rejoiced at a possible solution to their respective problems.

During the sessions of discussion concerning the blending of ministries, the possibility of having the Incarnation people come to New Hope was voiced. The thought of being able to use the entire building won out and it was decided to move to Incarnation if the vote to blend their ministries was agreed upon.

**Rationale for Blending of Ministries**

As New Hope Lutheran Church and Incarnation Lutheran Church are both in the Dilemma Park area (although different neighborhoods), the blending of these two ministries was determined to be highly desirable for the following reasons:

1. A strong Lutheran presence in the neighborhood of Incarnation is viable and needed. The vitality of the New Hope Congregation and the Incarnation congregation would fill this need.

2. Neighborhood trends shows that both the Hispanic and African American populations are significant and need to be included in a Multicultural mission.

3. As it is the goal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to have multiculturalism as one of its priorities of Incarnation/New Hope provides a model to use in trying to create this new paradigm for worshiping communities -- Anglos, African-American, and Hispanics.
Objectives

To provide a visible pastoral presence on the streets of the West Dilemma Park Community.

2. To provide a user-friendly, welcoming worship style with vitality at Incarnation/New Hope; one celebrated in Spanish and the other celebrated in English.

3. To provide the facility for neighborhood outreach such as the Salvation Army’s Head Start, community group called Nobel Neighbors, English as a Second Language classes and other community based programs as called for by the congregation.

4. To provide pastoral assistance or referral when called upon.

5. To invite members of the Hispanic, African American, Asian and Anglo communities to worship at Incarnation/New Hope and welcome them with a sense of hospitality.

Process for Blending of Ministries

1. A vote was taken on December 19, 1993 by New Hope Lutheran Church and Incarnation Lutheran Church. Incarnation voted unanimously to blend the ministries. New Hope had one person who voted against blending the ministries.

2. At the same time, both congregations asked if they preferred to begin worshiping together within three months or within six months. Both congregations voted to begin worshiping together within three months. The date of February 6, 1994 was selected as a date to begin worshiping together at the Incarnation building.

3. Before the actual worship together date, a joint Christmas part was given for the youth. There were over 30 youth in attendance. Both the Council of Incarnation and the Service Committee of New Hope voted to have a joint Christmas Eve celebration. It was very successful and many commented how wonderful it felt with more participation in a Christmas Eve candlelight service. The same Christmas play was performed by the youth of both churches; Incarnation’s
play was at 9:30 a.m. and New Hope’s play was at 11:00 a.m. (The angel’s wings were quickly driven from Incarnation to New Hope for their usage.)

4. The two churches began worshiping on February 6, 1994 with over 125 in the worship service (including guests from Our Savior’s in Burbank).

5. They selected a new name “Spirit of Joy Community Church” and received permission to blend their ministries by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and became a new congregation of the ELCA.

MODEL NO. 3  A RELOCATION OF TWO BLENDING CONGREGATIONS

Blending of Ministries / Hickory North Carolina

Two existing congregations, both old established congregations, found themselves in poor service areas and in a declining condition. They were Good Shepherd and Good Hope of Hickory, North Carolina. Good Hope organized in 1923 with 113 Baptized and Good Shepherd organized in 1956 with 104 Baptized. The combined Confirmed Membership is 188.

Early discussions toward sharing a pastor did not materialize. Discussions about blending of ministries began in 1992 but seemed a long time gestating. At one point, it all seemed lost. However, with help from the Division for Outreach, the bishop’s staff and some leaders of the two churches reading clearly the handwriting on the wall, the process moved along slowly but surely.

The Mission Director had established a new pinpoint for Good Hope to relocate to a growth area in 1993. Since relocation did not work out, a new local sub-consultation was held on June 9, 1994. That approved the new pinpoint for the newly blended ministry. A new site for this blended ministry now named "Unity Lutheran Church” was purchased at the pinpoint at Falling Creek Road and 29th Street, NE in Hickory.

An Attorney, Dr. Backman Brown, worked with the congregation on their legal documents for blending of ministries.
The newly called pastor has now been on site about a month. The Mission director has been working with the leadership to determine the need for early-on financial help. The Mission Director had one earlier meeting with the congregation council to plan program ministry and to attempt to answer questions.

This clearly is a blending of ministry. Two congregations of near equal weakness have joined together to address a service area that is totally different from either of their original areas of service. All resources from the sale of the two existing buildings will go toward the ministry of the blended ministry. There were enough assets to purchase the church site costing $125,000.

The Division for Outreach building consultant approved the site and is working with the congregation to plan the church building proposal and subsequent building.

**MODEL NO. 4 TWO STRONG CONGREGATIONS BLEND FOR GREATER POTENTIAL MINISTRY**

**Redeemer Lutheran Church and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church / Wayne, Nebraska**

In the Spring of 1993, a joint committee of Redeemer (733 baptized members) and St. Paul’s 486 baptized members) Lutheran Churches of Wayne, Nebraska began to explore five potential models of cooperation between the two congregations. As it explored the strengths and weaknesses of each model, the committee reached a surprising consensus. The unanimous opinion was that there really was little, if any, justification for two ELCA congregations to continue parallel ministries that may unintentionally compete with each other or divide them. Therefore, the joint committee suggested that the possibilities of blending their ministries be fully considered by both councils and congregations.

The congregational councils were also surprised at the joint committee’s report. Each council discussed separately their reactions and had one joint meeting with both council’s together. In these discussions, a broad range of questions were raised that needed further discussion.
Primarily, the members of the joint committee and councils had wrestled with how they could best carry out their mission to make disciples of all nations in Wayne, Nebraska. A blended ministry could offer advantages of combined resources, a staff with specialized skills, a broader variety of programs and a unified voice of the Gospel in the community.

This conclusion paralleled an earlier study by the Lutheran Council USA in the 1970’s. It had invited representatives from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and Australia to the United States to study the strengths and weaknesses of Lutheranism. Their general conclusion was that there were too many Lutheran Churches in the United States. Smaller congregations in communities with fractured voices were not able to influence the future development of society.

The fact that Redeemer and St. Paul’s congregations came to the same conclusion looking at their own community is significant. The ability of both congregations to struggle through the use of their resource and their loyalty to their pastoral staff and fiscal properties in a way that could enable them to break free and look at the mission potential of God is amazing.

A second joint committee was organized in the Fall of 1993 and prepared a discussion booklet entitled "A Look to the Future." This booklet outlined the history of the two congregations and gave the background behind the discussion of future relationships. The booklet laid out three separate and interesting choices for consideration. One was independence, the second was cooperation and finally the third was a united or blended ministry. Public forums were held and open and frank discussions were conducted by both congregations.

While the blending of ministries possibility showed many strengths, the committee was not afraid to raise the critical questions surrounding potential blending of ministries. They identified what other people thought, that blended ministries create a loss of membership or a diminished sense of identity in the new congregation. Some people who were inactive use a blending of ministries as an occasion to leave membership. In a blending of ministries, they pointed out that some people will be unhappy with the results and will either transfer to another church or simply drop out of their relationship to a congregation altogether. Even for those who stay, the sense of ownership and identity with the new congregation may be diminished. The sense of ownership and identity comes from years of participation and investment.
The committee needed to answer these concerns and build a response that would demonstrate that a larger congregation would engage more people in serious forms of ministry. A strong appeal for a unified voice in proclaiming the Gospel in their community along with improved programming with specialized staff and effective use of their building resources would lead them to an efficient and increased vitality and spiritual renewal of the members of the two congregations. They concluded that the following five reasons were reason for blending ministries:

1. To make our ministry more efficient by reducing duplication.

2. To expand our programs and make them stronger.

3. To become more effective in evangelism and outreach.

4. To have a more adequate physical facility.

5. To have more specialized staff.

An individual congregational vote resulted in the third choice of a combined or united ministry had 65.8% of those voting. Only 7.6% wanted to continue a separate ministry.

At the annual meeting, a joint committee of six members from each congregation were appointed in 1994. Their charge was to gather the information necessary to formulate a plan for blending of ministries. A fire occurred in the Spring of the year at one of the congregations which provided an opportunity for both congregations to begin to share the use of facilities. It was hard to control the situation to assure people that a blending of ministries had not already taken place. The final vote was scheduled for the fall of 1994. A joint committee of the two councils was appointed in July of 1994 to establish a suggested constitution and to care for other congregational concerns. Clearly through all of the statements on blending of ministries was the understanding that a larger ministry resulting from the blended ministries would enable the congregation to have a more effective Gospel witness in their community. On August 28, 1994, over 2/3 of the membership of the two congregations, at separate concurrent meetings, voted to blend their ministries and to be called Our Savior Lutheran Church.
The blending of ministry took place on January 1, 1995. For the mission and ministry, along with the unity of the new church, the three pastors decided it might be best for Our Savior Lutheran Church to begin with an entirely new pastoral staff. During the first six months after the blending of the new congregation, all accepted calls to other congregations. At the present time, the congregation is served by an interim pastor and a visitation pastor. On November 19, 1995, the congregation voted on a resolution from the building committee to build onto their existing church site. Due to lack of space, they are holding their Sunday School for 3rd through 12th grades at the local high school. They have three worship services, one at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and two on Sunday morning. Their 10:30 Sunday Morning worship service is broadcast over the local radio station and their Sunday School attendance averages over 100 each week and their weekly attendance averages nearly 400 persons.

As the Division for Outreach analyzes the community demographics and the impact of churches on their communities, we anticipate that many more churches like Redeemer and St. Paul will consider blended ministries to become strong congregations like the new Our Savior Lutheran in Wayne, Nebraska.

MODEL NO. 5 A BLENDING OF CONVENIENCE

Blending of Holy Redeemer Lutheran and Peace Lutheran Churches / Cedar Rapids, IA

In the fall of 1992, Peace Lutheran Church, because of declining membership numbers and the inability to continue supporting a full time pastor, decided to approach other ELCA congregations in the area about the possibility of blending their ministries. Letters were sent from the Peace Council to the Councils of Hope, Gloria Dei and Holy Redeemer Lutheran Churches requesting individual meetings to explore the possibility of blending their ministries. The meeting with the Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church Executive Committee was held on November 11, 1992.

Peace Lutheran Church had two major concerns:

1. Financially they could not continue beyond mid 1993, so a blending of ministries would have to be accomplished by then.

2. They wanted their pastor to continue to serve in the blended ministry.
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church was open to the possibility of blending their ministries within those time constraints and was willing to accept Peace Lutheran Church’s pastor as an Associate Pastor, providing that Peace’s assets would be used to supplement his salary for two or three years. It was also understood that since Peace Lutheran would be merging into Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church, Holy Redeemer’s name, basic constitutional structure and facilities would be retained and that Holy Redeemer’s pastor would be the Senior Pastor of the blended ministry.

Following the meetings with the various congregations, Peace Lutheran Church in a congregational meeting, December 6, 1992, voted to proceed with blending of ministries discussions with Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church. At its annual meeting on January 31, 1993, Holy Redeemer approved the concept of blending with Peace Lutheran Church and authorized the Executive Committee to continue pursuing the matter.

In the following months, several meetings of the Blending Committee, comprised of the Executive Committee members of both congregations, were held to work out the details of the blending of the ministries. The Blending Committee also met with John Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, to insure that blending plans would be in keeping with synod requirements. In February, 1993, the two congregations petitioned the Synod Council to approve their blended ministry.

Peace Lutheran Church members were invited to the 1993 mid-week Lenten services at Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church. The light suppers that preceded the services provided a good opportunity for the members of the two congregations to become acquainted. The services were conducted by both pastors.

The final worship service at Peace Lutheran Church’s facility was on Palm Sunday, April 4, 1993. Following that service the Peace Lutheran Church members caravanned to Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church where they were received in a special welcoming service.

On Easter, April 11, 1993, the Peace Lutheran Church congregation moved into Holy Redeemer’s facilities. Though they retained their corporate identity at that time, from that Sunday on they joined Holy Redeemer in worship and in its other programs. An office was provided at Holy Redeemer for
their pastor, and the usable furnishings from their building were moved to Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church. Mainly for legal reasons, it was decided that the congregations would not formally blend until Peace’s property was sold. In preparation for the formal blending of their ministries, Peace Lutheran Church’s property was listed for sale and an attorney was retained to prepare blending documents.

The two pastors met together weekly to discuss their working relationship, their areas of ministry, and their pastoral roles in the blended ministry. They also began meeting with a counselor from Lutheran Social Services to help with the development of their team ministry. During this time both pastors shared equally in the preaching and the leading of the worship services.

One of the most controversial (emotional) issues to resolve was the frequency of communion in the blended ministry. Peace Lutheran Church celebrated Holy Communion at all worship services. Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church celebrated Holy Communion on the first and third weekends of the month. It was decided that Holy Communion would be celebrated every week but not at all services.

The Peace Lutheran Church property was sold in early September, 1993. The two congregations met separately on September 19, 1993 to approve the Plan of Blending prepared by the attorney. Immediately following that approval the newly blended ministry met to call Peace Lutheran Church’s pastor to serve as Associate Pastor.

Overall, the blending of the ministries has gone well. The members have blended well. The pastoral team, however, did not work out. Because of financial and other reasons, the Associate Pastor’s position was terminated in December of 1994.
MODEL NO. 6  A BLENDING AND ADJUSTMENT IN MISSION

Grace and Peace Lutheran Churches / Peoria, IL

The following is a summary of the blending of ministries that took place between Grace Lutheran Church and Peace Lutheran Church. Both of the churches are located in Peoria, Illinois.

Peace Lutheran Church began as a mission in 1982. The mission was supported by the area conference of the Illinois District of the American Lutheran Church. Grace Lutheran Church was established in 1911 and was part of the Lutheran Church in America. Peace Lutheran, due to a number of factors, never grew as expected. At the time of the blending of ministries, Peace Lutheran had 89 baptized members and averaged 35 in attendance at worship. Grace Lutheran had 409 baptized members and averaged 107 in worship.

At the time of the blending of ministries, Peace Lutheran worshipped in a modular building which seated a maximum of 70 people. Grace Lutheran had a very pleasant and adequate facility. Under the leadership of two different pastors, neither church was unable to minister to their neighborhoods. Grace was in an area that was changing to African American. Peace had a mixture of lower cost housing where people often moved and a contrasting higher cost neighborhood.

The two churches were very different in age level of members and style of operation and worship. Originally, these two factors stood as barriers to the blending of the ministries. In the end, they proved to be assets blending the two congregations into one that was able to minister to a new neighborhood.

While Grace Lutheran was struggling with the question of whether it should relocate, Peace Lutheran was struggling with whether it should relocate or close. Both churches grapple with issues over a period of years trying to determine options. During this period of time, the two pastors began to discuss the possibility of some joint ministry.

From the very beginning, the synod was involved in everything that these two congregations did. A retreat was held with Grace’s Council. Meetings were held separately with each council and
congregation. Next a joint meeting was held with the two councils. Suggestions were made that fellowship opportunities be scheduled so that members of both congregations could get to know one another. This was done. The results were encouraging.

When Grace Lutheran decided to sell their building and relocate to the property that they owned on the north side of Peoria, Pease was invited to seriously consider a blending of their ministries. The decision was to blend the ministries. A blending, by definition, involved a congregation giving up its separate identity and uniting with an already existing congregation. A blending involved two or more congregations that join together to become a new entity with a new name, a new identification number, etc. They technically "blended," keeping the incorporation and EIN number of Grace, but incorporated some of the good aspects of blending ministries.

Grace sold their building and began worshiping at a Seventh Day Adventist Church. Peace was invited to join them in worship. They did. At this time serious steps where taken to actually blend the ministries. Again, a strong factor in bringing this blending of ministries into being was the cooperation and leadership of the pastors. The new church was named appropriately, "Grace and Peace Lutheran."

The timing could not have been better. The new facilities were being planned and both churches were able to have input. The property was located on the north side of Peoria. It was well located both in terms of visibility on a major highway and in a growth area of the town.

After the blending of the ministries, both pastors served the new congregation for a period of six months. At this time, the pastor of Peace Lutheran accepted a Call and left. The pastor of Grace continues to serve the blended ministry.

There were numerous problems to address in this blending of ministries. The style of worship probably was one of the most difficult. There were differences concerning how the councils were run. The balance in representation in decision making was another problem. This was resolved by allowing equal representation even though Grace Lutheran was much larger than Peace. Use of altar furnishing from the old churches; provisions in the constitution concerning elections; confirmation practices; Sunday School, etc. were all differences that needed to be resolved. As might be expected, there still exists some differences of opinion on certain issues, but it can be said that Grace and Peace have learned to live together for the glory of God.
Since the completion of the blending of the ministries and the facilities, the congregations have joined in an intentional effort for outreach and have grown in numbers. There remains one major problem for this new congregation to deal with; the sale of the property once occupied by Peace Lutheran. This property has become a valuable asset for commercial development. Previous to the blending the the ministries, an agreement was made with a developer next to the property that gives them "right of first refusal." Legally, this has hindered other developers from making a fair offer. When sold, the proceeds will be divided in three ways; one third for the synod Endowment for Mission; one third for a specific outreach ministry at Grace and Peace; and one third for disposition in any way the congregation decides.

These two congregations are to be commended for the way they proceeded in bringing this blending of ministries about. They are to be commended also for their communication and work with the synod through the Mission Director. Everyone benefitted from the experience of the Division for Outreach and the experience of another congregation in the synod that blended. Although the other congregation in the synod was much different, their blending of ministries has also been successful.

MODEL NO. 7  A BLENDING DISCUSSION THAT RESULTED IN CLARITY FOR BOTH PARTIES BUT A DECISION NOT TO BLEND

This is an account of consolidation negotiations 1986-1991 between Bethel, Zion and St. Olaf Lutheran Churches.

It began formally in 1985 when the Bethel and St. Olaf Church Councils decided to discuss consolidation. When the leaders of Zion heard this was happening, they asked to be included. Also, it should be noted, that these three churches had already done some joint staffing. Bob Evans was working as the outreach pastor for all three congregations. John Midtling was working as visitation pastor for both St. Olaf and Zion. The three congregations had also been working together in joint Lenten worship and summer program for several years.
Early in 1986, Pastors Dan Olson from Bethel, Luther Peterson from St. Olaf and David Johnson from Zion, along with representatives from the three congregations, met with David Olson from the Southeast Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church, Glen Leaf and Roger Mackay from the Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. These three were the advisors throughout the process. Bob Evans also worked closely with us all the way from 1985-95. We chose a model that had been successful, merging St. Paul’s and Reformation Lutheran Churches in St. Paul in the 1970’s. Roger Mackay had been involved in that one.

The process called for three task forces: 1) Information gathering and analysis--study the churches and the community; 2) mission and goals; and 3) alternatives--present possible choices from: stay separate to merger, with four or five possibilities in between. We began with great enthusiasm and growing good will. Each task force had a synod official as an advisor. By late 1988, all three task forces had completed their work and the final recommendation was that we should “go for it!” -- consolidation into one congregation with one site.

In January 1989, the three congregations voted at their annual meetings to establish a “Commission of 36” with the following time table: five committees would work from March 1989 through August 1991. In January 1992, the three congregations would vote on a consolidation agreement and the new congregation would officially begin January 1, 1993.

On April 2, 1989, the Commission of 36 met for the first time and divided up into five committees: ministry, finance, site, governance and staff. The committees met at least once a month, and the commission met about every two months. There were many meetings, hard hard work, and much prayer that God’s will would be done. By the end of 1989, the five committees were beginning to pull together their reports.

1990 began with great optimism. The Commission of 36 decided to move up the congregational meetings for final vote to November 1990 with the new congregation to begin on Pentecost 1991. By July, all five committees had completed their work. The site committee recommended the Bethel site. An addition would be built and some remodeling done.

This is where the trouble started. The Commission could not come to agreement on the site issue. Each congregation wanted its own site. So on July 29, the Commission of 36 met again and
decided to reconsider all three sites. A final report of the Commission of 36 was completed in September -- minus a site report. A new site report was promised before March 31, 1991. Many more meetings were held in early 1991 to iron out the site dilemma. In July 1991, Close Associates (architects) brought an “apples to apples” comparison of the three church sites, but no selection was made.

On September 18, 1991, the three pastors suggested keeping all three sites for the foreseeable future and going with the alternative of a three-point parish. But the Commission of 36 rejected this idea. In October, the Commission of 36 recommended St. Olaf as the site. On December 8, 1991 came the final vote on the consolidation agreement. Bethel voted 20 yes, 36 no. Zion voted 16 yes, 112 no. St. Olaf voted 89 yes, 4 no. This was the end of the three church consolidation process.

On January 1, 1992, Pastor Dan Olson left Bethel. Shortly after this, Wes Syverson arrived as interim pastor.

The three congregations continue to work together. We have a cooperative planning committee with representatives from all three churches that meets six times a year to plan our nine joint Lenten worship services, our three joint summer worship events, our Son Fun program (six weeks of summer program for neighborhood children), the summer Corn and Dog Feed, and numerous other joint ventures. Both St. Olaf and Zion share space with new African-American congregations. St. Olaf is looking at the possibility of shared youth ministry with this congregation.

Written by:

Luther E. Peterson, Pastor
St. Olaf Lutheran Church

MODEL NO. 8  A BLENDING DISCUSSION THAT LED TO A COOPERATIVE MINISTRY BUT MAINTAINED THEIR SEPARATE IDENTITIES
This is an account of consolidation negotiations 1992-1995 between Bethel and St. Olaf Lutheran Churches.

On May 11, 1992, the two executive committees met to: 1) review the failed tri-church process as reported in MODEL NO. 7 previous in this document. It was agreed that it was in the site selection that it all broke down; and 2) begin plans for a Bethel - St. Olaf consolidation. The feeling was that it should be much simpler with just two congregations. On October 28, 1992, the two church councils met in joint session and agreed unanimously to recommend to the congregations a full consolidation in one site.

In 1993, an Agreement of Intent was formulated between Bethel Church, St Olaf Church and the St. Olaf Retirement Communities. The two church buildings would be disposed of and the St. Olaf Retirement Communities would build a chapel for a cost of about $600,000, paid for by the sale of the two church buildings. The building would be leased for 30 years to the new congregation for the cost of $12,000 per year and used jointly by the new congregation and the St. Olaf Retirement Communities.

On June 6, 1993, both congregations voted. It had to be a 2/3 majority. Bethel voted overwhelmingly yes. St. Olaf voted 62 yes, 35 no -- not quite a 2/3 majority vote. What a horrible let down. The Bethel people were very angry at St. Olaf. The majority of St. Olaf people were just as angry at the St. Olaf folks who had voted no. Again, we had prayed Sunday after Sunday, day after day, that God’s will be done. We had prayed this prayer publicly and privately since 1986. We didn’t know what to make of this.

On May 15, 1994, (after things had cooled down a bit) both Bethel and St. Olaf churches voted to return to consolidation discussions. After several meetings, much disagreement, the opening up of old wounds, personality conflicts and a growing distrust, it was decided that a new feasibility study should be done. This was accomplished in late 1994. The study concluded that the new chapel would cost $800,000 instead of $600,000. This new figure was included in the revised Agreement of Intent and presented to the St. Olaf Retirement Communities for their approval. The increased cost would have to be paid by the St. Olaf Retirement Communities. They said “no” to this increased cost. This brought to an end the Bethel - St. Olaf consolidation discussions.
Was this God’s will? Many at St. Olaf still think so. We had the best advisors. Thousands of hours of blood, sweat and tears were put into these negotiations over a period of ten years and we prayed without ceasing. My opinion is that we tried to accomplish too much. A three-point urban parish might have worked or a two-point parish.

The three congregations continue to work together. We have a cooperative planning committee with representatives from all three churches that meets six times a year to plan our nine joint Lenten worship services, our three joint summer worship events, our Son Fun program (six weeks of summer program for neighborhood children), the summer Corn and Dog Feed, and numerous other joint ventures. Both St. Olaf and Zion share space with new African-American congregations. St. Olaf is looking at the possibility of shared youth ministry with this congregation.

Written by:

Luther E. Peterson, Pastor
St. Olaf Lutheran Church

11. SAMPLE PLAN AND AGREEMENT OF MERGING OF MINISTRIES

PLAN AND AGREEMENT OF MERGING OF MINISTRIES BETWEEN

____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH,
an _________(state) Not for Profit Corporation,

AND

____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH,
an _________(state) Not for Profit Corporation
THIS PLAN AND AGREEMENT OF MERGED MINISTRIES, made and entered into this _____ day of ______________, _____(year), by and between _________________________ Lutheran Church, an __________(state) not-for-profit corporation and _________________________ Lutheran Church, an __________(state) not-for-profit corporation, said corporations being hereinafter sometimes referred to jointly as "constituent corporations,"

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of __________, its Articles of Incorporation having been filed in the office of the Secretary of State of __________ on this _____ day of _______________, _____(year), and a Certificate of Incorporation having been recorded in the office of the Recorder of Deeds of _______________ County on the _____ day of _______________, _____(year), and

WHEREAS, ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of __________, its Articles of Incorporation having been filed in the office of the Secretary of State of __________ on this _____ day of _______________, _____(year), and a Certificate of Incorporation having been recorded in the office of the Recorder of Deeds of _______________ County on the _____ day of _______________, _____(year), and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of each of the constituent corporations deems it advisable that ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH be merged into ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH on the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, and in accordance with the applicable provisions of the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of _____(year) of the State of __________, which permits such merging of ministries.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and of the agreements, covenants and conditions hereinafter set forth, ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, by their respective Boards of Directors, hereby agree each with the other as follows:
ARTICLE I

____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH shall be merged into a single corporation, in accordance with the provisions of the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of _____ (year) of the State of __________ by ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH merging into ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH shall be the surviving corporation of the merging ministries.

ARTICLE II

Upon the merging of ministries becoming effective:

1. The constituent corporations shall be a single corporation and the name of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, the surviving corporation, shall be changed to ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, a Not for Profit Corporation;

2. The separate existence of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH shall cease, except to the extent provided for by the laws of the State of __________ in the case of a corporation after its merged to another corporation;

3. The real estate, improvements thereon and certain personal property located in the improvements now commonly known as the situs of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH shall be sold pursuant to agreement of the membership and Board of Directors of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and the proceeds of the sale shall be distributed pursuant to agreement of the membership and directors of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, which agreements to sell and to disburse proceeds shall be deemed to be transferred to and vested in ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH as the surviving corporation and the terms of said agreements shall not be impaired by reason of the merging of ministries but shall become a binding obligation upon the surviving corporation, and the terms and conditions of the said agreements shall be performed by the surviving corporation;
4. The surviving corporation shall thenceforth be responsible and liable for all of the liabilities and obligations of each of the constituent corporations; and any claim existing or action or proceeding pending by or against any of the constituent corporations may be prosecuted to judgment by the surviving corporation as if the merging of ministries had not taken place, or the surviving corporation may be substituted in place of the constituent corporations. Neither the rights of creditors nor any liens upon the property of any of the constituent corporations shall be impaired by the merging of ministries;

5. The Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, as existing and constituted immediately prior to the effective date of the merging of ministries shall be the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws of the surviving corporation.

6. For all accounting purposes, the effective date of the merging of ministries shall be deemed to be the close of business on the __________ day of _______________, _____(year);

7. Subject to the provisions of sub-paragraph (3) herein, the surviving corporation shall thereupon possess all the rights, privileges, immunities and franchises of each of the constituent corporations, and all property, real, personal and mixed, and debts due on whatever account, and all choices in action, and every other interest belonging to or due to each of the constituent corporations shall be deemed to be transferred to and vested in ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH as the surviving corporation, without further action or deed; and the title to any real estate, or any interest therein, vested in any of the constituent corporations shall not revert to or be in any way impaired by reason of the merging of ministries but shall vest in the surviving corporation.

(8) Subject to the provisions of Article V herein subsequent to the merging of ministries, the surviving corporation shall be governed by the constitution of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH as effective on the __________ day of ________________, ______(year), until the new constitution is ratified by two-thirds of the Voting Members present and voting of the surviving corporation; and,

(9) The surviving corporation shall financially operate pursuant to the combined respective budgets
of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH until a merged ministry budget is approved by the surviving corporation’s voting members, at either a special meeting or not later than at the time of the first annual meeting of the Board of Directors following the merging of ministries.

ARTICLE III

The surviving corporation shall pay all expenses of carrying this Plan and Agreement of Merging of Ministries into effect and accomplishing the merging of ministries provided for herein.

ARTICLE IV

The assets and liabilities of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, at the effective date of the merging of the ministries, shall be taken on the book of the surviving corporation at the amounts at which they, respectively, shall, on such date, be carried on the books of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH.

ARTICLE V

Initially there shall be a minimum of twelve (12) or a maximum of twenty-one (21) directors of the surviving corporation, in addition to the pastors of each congregation. The directors of each church constituting the Board of Directors of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH immediately prior to the effective date of the merged ministry shall be the same persons constituting the Board of Directors of ____________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH immediately subsequent to the effective date of the merging of ministries. Such persons shall hold office until the first annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the surviving corporation and until their respective successors are elected according to the bylaws of the surviving corporation. The term of all officers shall be deemed to be the officers of the surviving corporation upon the effective date of the merging of ministries. Thereafter, other persons may be elected or appointed to such offices from time to time in accordance with the Bylaws of the surviving corporation.

ARTICLE VI
If at any time the surviving corporation shall consider or be advised that any further assignment of assurance in law is necessary or desirable to vest in the surviving corporation the title to any property or rights of any of the constituent corporations, the proper officers shall execute and deliver all such proper assignments, conveyances and assurances in law and do all things necessary or proper to vest such property or rights in the surviving corporation, and otherwise to carry out the purposes of this Plan and Agreement of Merging of Ministries.

ARTICLE VII

This Plan and Agreement of Merging of Ministries shall be submitted to the members of the ________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and to the members of ________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH as provided by law, and shall take effect and be deemed to be the Plan and Agreement of Merging of Ministries of said corporations upon the approval or adoption thereof by the vote of at least two-thirds of the Voting Members present and voting of ________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH and ________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH in accordance with the requirements of the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of _____(year) of the State of __________, and upon the execution, filing and recording of such documents and the doing of such acts required to accomplish the merging of ministries under the provisions of the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of _____(year) of the State of __________.

ARTICLE VIII

The call of Pastor ________________ shall be continued and shall be an obligation of the surviving corporation, ________________ LUTHERAN CHURCH, following the adoption of the Plan and Agreement for Merging of Ministries.

12. SAMPLE MODEL FOR RECOMMENDATION FOR DISPOSITION OF REAL ESTATE ASSETS FROM (CHURCH NAME) MEMBERS OF MERGING MINISTRIES TASK FORCE
If and when the proposed / Merging of Ministries Plan is approved by the two congregations, we commend the following plan be implemented:

It is recommended that:

1. Real estate owned by _______ shall be marketed and sold.

2. Proceeds from the sale of _______ owned Real Estate shall be divided accordingly:
   a. One-third shall be given to the __________________________ Synod Endowment for Mission.
   b. One-third shall be used by _______ and _______ Lutheran Churches to establish an endowment supporting outreach ministry. The endowment guidelines shall be established prior to the election of the first _______ and _______ Lutheran Church Council.
   c. One-third shall be used in whatever way is determined by _______ and _______ Lutheran Churches.

3. Obligations to be discharged against the sale proceeds are:
   a. Outstanding obligations against the property: $___________ - _________ advance for storm sewer improvements.
   b. Fees for appraisers, realtors, and lawyers involved in the sale.

PROCEDURES FOR A JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Joint Steering Committee is composed of members appointed by action of the respective congregations. Its purpose will be to explore and present the possibility and desirability of blending
of the ministries involved. It will further be responsible for all procedures leading to a decision by the involved congregations.

Blending of ministries is accomplished by a favorable two-third vote in each congregation upon an identical resolution prepared by the Joint Steering Committee and recommended by the respective Church Councils, all in keeping with the provisions of the Religious Incorporation Act of Illinois:

The duties of the Joint Steering Committee will accordingly be as follows:

1. Make such studies and secure such pertinent information as may be required by the committee and congregation(s)

2. Develop conclusions (recommendations) to be used as general guidelines. (Note: These conclusions will probably not all be a part of the legal document of blending the ministry, but are needed as a general understanding of possible direction of ministry for the new congregation.)

3. Through mailings and information meetings, inform congregation(s) of progress and conclusions so as to prepare for intelligent balloting.

4. Prepare document for blending ministries to be submitted to congregations. This may include such specific recommendations as the committee will deem necessary for proper action by the congregations.

5. Be responsible for all necessary procedures connected with vote of congregations on the blending of ministries proposal:
   
   • presentation to respective church councils;
   • public notice;
   • notice to congregations;
   • meeting of congregation(s);
   • announcement of results; and,
   • recording of documents (if favorable).
These procedures will require periodic meetings of the Joint Steering Committee. Assignment of specific responsibilities can be made to sub-committees which will report to the committee. Sub-committees may, at the discretion of the Joint Steering Committee, invite additional persons to serve.

14. AGENDA FOR BLENDING OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS

The following procedure is to be followed in the blending of religious corporations:

1. The Board of Trustees of each corporation passes a resolution prescribing the conditions of blending ministries and the manner of carrying same into effect -- including the name of the new corporation and its constitution. See example attached hereto.

2. The resolution of the Board of Trustees is then submitted to a vote of the members of the corporation at a special meeting. Twenty (20) days’ notice of the special meeting and the purpose thereof must be mailed to each member. See example attached hereto. The notice must also be published once in a newspaper in the County(ies).

3. At the meeting, a favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all members must be obtained in order to pass the resolution. Voting must be by ballot.

4. After the meeting, a verified statement reciting the action and the vote, together with a certified copy of the resolution, executed by presidents of both the corporations shall be recorded in
duplicate in the office of the Recorder of Deeds of the County(ies). See example attached hereto.

5. Thereafter, a notice in general terms of such blending of ministries shall be published in the County in which the corporation is located.

6. Finally, a notice of the effectiveness of the blending of ministries should be mailed to each of the members of the blending ministries.
15. SCRIPT FOR MEETING OF MEMBERS

1. The meeting shall be called to order by the pastor in attendance.

2. The person who signed the notice shall state to the meeting that the proper notice and published notice was sent to a newspaper in the county.

3. The pastor shall then state that those present who previously mailed in a card indicating their vote are entitled to vote in person, and that their proxies will be returned to them, if desired. The presence of a quorum should then be ascertained (in excess of two-thirds of the members).

4. If two-thirds of those entitled to vote are not present, move to adjourn the meeting for one more week, same time, same place, the following Sunday without notice, if desired. Then proceed to obtain missing proxies. If this still isn't the two-thirds, follow the same procedure once more.

5. Then the pastor should point out the matter for business and read the resolution to be considered.

6. Motion should then be made, seconded and carried to put the resolution to vote by ballot. Ballots should be distributed and the vote taken.

7. Assuming a favorable vote is reached, the meeting should be closed.

8. A Statement of Merging of Ministries for each congregation should be executed by the President or Vise-President of each corporation and notarized.

9. Both statements, after being certified and notarized, should be filed in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of the county. Thereafter, the new corporation will come into effect.

10. Finally, a single notice of the blending of ministries should be published in a newspaper
16. SAMPLE NOTICE OF LEGAL MEETING

NOTICE OF LEGAL MEETING

Please take notice that a special meeting of the members of _______________ Lutheran Church, _______________(city), __________(state), the _____ day of ________________, ____ (year) at __________(time) at _______________ Lutheran Church, _______________(address) to consider and vote upon a resolution to merge their ministries pursuant to the statutes of the State of __________ with the ___________________ Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, under a Plan of Merging Ministries the terms of which generally provide that the merged ministry corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges and property of the blending ministries corporations, and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

___________________________________
President

By Order of the Council

DATED: ____________________________

17. SAMPLE NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that a Special Meeting of the Members of ________________ Lutheran Church of ______________(city), __________(state) will be held on the _____ day of _________________, _____(year) at __________(time) to consider and vote upon the following resolution of the Council submitted to the members:

RESOLVED that _______________ Lutheran Church of ______________(city), __________(state), a corporation organized pursuant to the _________(state) Religious Corporation Laws of _____(year), as amended, and the _______________ Synod of _________________(city), __________(state), a corporation organized pursuant to the _________(state) Religious Corporation Laws of 1872, as amended, should merge their ministries pursuant to the Statues of the State of _________ on the following terms and conditions:

1. This resolution shall be submitted to a vote of the members of this corporation to be held on the __________ day of _________________, _____(year) at __________(time) at _______________ Lutheran Church _________________(city), __________(state), after twenty (20) days’ written notice to each member and twenty (20) days’ notice by publications, which the officers of this corporation are directed to prepare, mail, and publish.

2. The name of the merging ministries corporation shall be the ________________ Lutheran Church.

3. The merging ministry corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges and property of the merging ministries corporations and shall be subject to all the liabilities and duties of the merging ministries corporations.
4. The Constitution of the merging ministry corporation shall be in the form of the "Approved Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" as adopted in _____(year), with such modifications as are attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference.

5. The original Council of the merged ministry corporation shall be composed of the following persons who shall serve until the annual meeting of the blended ministry corporation in the year indicated:

18. SAMPLE NOTICE OF MERGING OF MINISTRIES TO BE PUBLISHED IN A NEWSPAPER

NOTICE OF MERGING OF MINISTRIES TO BE PUBLISHED IN A NEWSPAPER IN COUNTY

(after the merging of ministries has been approved)

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Plan of Merging of Ministries pursuant to which the _____________ Lutheran Church in ________________(city), ____________(state), and the _____________ Lutheran Church in ________________(city), ____________(state) were merged and became effective on the _______ day of ____________, ______(year), and that the merged ministry corporation adopted the corporate name of _________________ Lutheran Church.

________________________________________ Synod

An __________(state) Religious Corporation
SAMPLE BALLOT

BALLOT

FOR PROPOSED MERGING OF MINISTRIES OF the _______________ Lutheran
Church of _________________(city), __________(state) and _______________ Lutheran
Church of _________________(city), __________(state):

I desire to vote "YES" _____ on the proposed merging of ministries.

I desire to vote "NO" _____ on the proposed merging of ministries.

Signed______________________________

DATE:____________________

20. SAMPLE AFFIDAVIT

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF _________________)
    ) SS.
COUNTY OF _________________)

I, _________________, do solemnly swear that at a meeting of the members of
Mergers and Consolidations

Page 85

___________ Lutheran Church of _________________(city), __________(state) in the County of _______________ and State of __________ on the _____ day of _________________, upon
proper notice and for that purpose, the following resolution was adopted authorizing a merging of
ministries with _______________ Lutheran Church of _______________(city), ___________(state)
by a favorable vote of in excess of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the corporation:

RESOLVED that _______________ Lutheran Church of ______________(city),
__________(state), a corporation organized pursuant to the ________(state) Religious
Corporation Laws of _____(year), as amended, and _______________ Lutheran Church, a
corporation organized pursuant to the ________(state) Religious Corporation Laws of
______(year), as amended, should be merged together pursuant to the Statutes of the State of
___________ on the following terms and conditions:

1. This resolution shall be submitted to a vote of the members of this corporation to be
held on the ___ ___ day of _______________ at __________(time), at
___________ Lutheran Church, _______________(city), __________(state),
after twenty (20) days’ notice by publications, which the officers of this corporation
are directed to prepared, mail and publish.

2. The name of the merged ministry corporation shall be ______________ Lutheran
Church.

3. The merged ministry corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges and
property of the merging ministry corporations and shall be subject to all the liabilities
and duties of the merging ministry corporations.

4. The Constitution of the merging ministry corporation shall be in the form of the
"Approved Constitution for Congregations of the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America" as adopted in _____(year) and amended in _____(year), with such
modifications as are attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by
reference.

5. The original Council of the merged ministry corporation shall be composed of the
following persons who shall serve until the annual meeting of the merged ministry corporation in the year indicated:

FURTHER RESOLVED that upon a favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each of the merging ministry corporations, the officers of this corporation are hereby directed to take all action and to execute and record all certificates and documents, necessary or desirable, to effectuate the merging of ministries.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the merged ministry corporation shall utilize the church premises of _______________ Lutheran Church, _______________(city), ____________ (state) for all regular worship services and the parsonage of _______________ Lutheran Church, _______________(city), ____________ (state) until such time as the Council shall determine that other arrangements are in the best interests of the merged ministry corporation and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

And I, _______________ do solemnly swear that at a meeting of the members of _______________ Lutheran Church of ______________(city), ____________ (state) in the County of _______________ and State of ____________ on the _____ day of _______________ upon proper notice and for that purpose, the following resolution was adopted authorizing a merging of ministries with _______________ Lutheran Church, by a favorable vote in excess of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the corporation:

RESOLVED that _______________ Lutheran Church of ______________(city), ____________ (state), a corporation organized pursuant to the ____________ (state) Religious Corporation Laws of _____(year), as amended, and _______________ Lutheran Church, a corporation organized pursuant to the ____________ (state) Religious Corporation Laws of _____(year), as amended, should be merged pursuant to the Statutes of the State of _______________ on the following terms and conditions:

1. This resolution shall be submitted to a vote of the members of this corporation to be held on the _____ day of _______________ at ____________ (time), at _______________ Lutheran Church, ________________(city), ____________ (state),
after twenty (20) days’ notice by publications, which the officers of this corporation are directed to prepare, mail and publish.

2. The name of the merged ministry corporation shall be the ______________ Lutheran Church.

3. The merged ministry corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges and property of the merged ministry corporations and shall be subject to all the liabilities and duties of the merging ministries corporations.

4. The Constitution of the merged ministry corporation shall be in the form of the "Approved Constitution for Congregations of the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" as adopted in _____(year) and amended in _____(year), with such modifications as are attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference.

5. The original Council of the merged ministry corporation shall be composed of the following persons who shall serve until the annual meeting of the merged ministry corporation in the year indicated:

FURTHER RESOLVED that upon a favorable vote of the two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each of the merging ministries corporations, the officers of this corporation are hereby directed to take all action and to execute and record all certificates and documents, necessary or desirable, to effectuate the merging of ministries.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the merged ministry corporation shall utilize the church premises of ______________ Lutheran Church, ______________(city), __________(state) for all regular worship services and the parsonage of the ______________ Lutheran Church, ______________(city), __________(state) until such time as the Council shall determine that other arrangements are in the best interests of the merged ministry corporation.

And at these meetings your affiant acted as Chair Persons.
PRESCRIBED and SWORN before me

this _______Day of ______________A.D.,

_____

______________________________
Notary Public

21. SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE OF CLOSURE AND BLENDING