

Looking Ahead

Between each Mutual Ministry Review, specific events and ministries will be unfolding for the congregation. Discussing these together ahead of time will both clarify expectations and provide a basis for the next review. Each review should therefore include some forward-looking questions:

- What will be happening at church between this review and the next one?
- What challenges are coming up for us?
- What do we want to learn from those events and experiences?
- What decisions are we preparing to make related to this review?
- What do we need to know before making those decisions?
- What can we do together to ensure that we'll have the resources to make those decisions?
- **During a transition, a Position Description which meets the mutual approval of the priest, Wardens and Vestry is to be completed between the seventh and twelfth month of their ministry together. What areas of ministry should receive priority in this description?**

Your Notes:

This document was adapted from the work of congregational consultants of the Diocese of Washington, based on original work by The Episcopal Church Foundation, Ms. Sally Bucklee, and the Office of Congregational Development of the National Episcopal Church.

Name of Diocese

Mutual Ministry Review

Celebrate Success ...

Identify Challenges ...

Look Toward the Future ...

... Together

What is Mutual Ministry Review, and why should our parish do it? Mutual Ministry Review is a way for every parish to ask, "How are we doing?" It is a time to celebrate what has been done well and to understand what might be done better. As Christian people we must always ask: "What is God calling us to do and to accomplish here in this place?" And then, "How can we best practice this ministry?"

Ministry is the work of the whole people of God, not just of the ordained clergy. Therefore, Mutual Ministry Review is meant to help the entire parish better accomplish God's mission. What is being reviewed is the ministry of laity and clergy working together in the daily life of the community for the glory of God.

Mutual Ministry Review focuses our priorities. It is intended to nurture environments where responsibilities are discussed and reviewed regularly and comfortably. As a result, communities and individuals will understand what is expected of them. Roles will be clarified, and time and energy centered on what is important for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Participants are encouraged to remember that the intent of the Mutual Ministry Review is to improve effective ministry. The focus will be on means of improvement rather than on reasons why something was not done. Within the pastoral context of the review process, the emphasis is on **celebrating the successes and identifying the challenges.** This is sound, healthy stewardship.



Developmental Tasks

During a transition, the developmental tasks of the church continue until a permanent Rector is chosen. In our Letters of Agreement with Interim Ministers or Priests in Charge, evaluation of these tasks is specified as a component of the Mutual Ministry Reviews.

In the following areas, what progress has already been made? What work still needs to be done?

- Coming to terms with the history of the congregation and its relationships with previous clergy.
- Discovering the congregation's unique identity apart from previous clerical leadership, creating a new Mission Statement and setting new goals.
- Facilitating the shifts in leadership which naturally occur in times of transition and celebrating those ministries while encouraging new leaders to come forward.
- Renewing a working relationship with the diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource to the other.
- Building a strong commitment to the clergy and lay leadership of our church, and to the cohesiveness and health of the congregation as a community of faith.

Your Notes:



Mutual Ministry Review Questions

The following questions will provide a means for the congregation to offer some input to the Vestry as they prepare for the review.

Looking Back

- How did we live out the Gospel this year? How did we put our Mission Statement into action?
- How would you describe the quality of our community life this past year?
- What was a highlight of our ministry this past year – with one another? In the world? Who was responsible for making it happen?
- What do you wish had happened this past year? What is our greatest need?

Your Notes:



“Mutual”

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Pastor ↔ Congregation

An MMR is not “mutual” because pastor and congregation evaluate one another’s performance.

“Mutual”

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Pastor, Vestry & Congregation ↔ Mission

It is mutual because pastor, vestry and congregation all look together at the ministry of the whole church, to see how well we are fulfilling our stated mission.



Planning A Mutual Ministry Review

I. Deciding where and when to begin

Many believe that the most critical influence on congregational health and vitality is the Vestry/Pastor relationship, and that is where Mutual Ministry Review usually begins. Mutual Ministry Reviews work best when they are part of a **regularly scheduled** process of clarifying expectations, responsibilities, and effectiveness. When discussion and feedback are expected as a normal part of life together, the anxiety about such a process is greatly reduced.

At all times, prayer and support for everyone involved in the Review is integral to the process. **Avoiding defensiveness, encouraging participation, and setting clear goals** for turning challenges into successes are key factors.

Comprehensive reviews are not helpful when major conflicts are present. Using evaluation as a weapon is never acceptable. When regular assessments are a part of a congregation and pastor's life together, strengths and challenges can be identified early and easily. The time to begin a review process is NOT when the relationship is already in trouble. If major tension has developed, conflict resolution or problem solving is called for, not ministry review.

II. Identifying what you want to achieve

A successful Mutual Ministry Review helps both pastor and vestry feel affirmed, supported, and encouraged in their ministry and valued as

individuals whose efforts and accomplishments are recognized and appreciated. Both personal and organizational problems need to be tactfully but clearly identified and mutually explored to find ways to alleviate the problems.

The vestry and pastor should exchange ideas on priorities for continuing personal growth and development in the pastor's skills, the vestry's effectiveness, and their mutual effectiveness as a vestry/pastor team. A successful review will leave all parties uplifted and energized by a sense of God's presence and action in the process.

III. Clarifying Objectives

In the standard Letter of Agreement between churches and pastors in this Diocese, the following are identified as objectives for the Mutual Ministry Review process:

- Provide the priest, Wardens and Vestry opportunity to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministry they share.
 - Establish a vision and goals for the work of the parish for the next six months as well as for the longer term.
 - Isolate areas of conflict or disappointment that have not received adequate attention and may be adversely affecting mutual ministry.
 - Clarify expectations of all parties to help put any future conflicts in manageable form.
 - Determine the "fit" between the priest's gifts and skills and the goals of the parish
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