

# Ministry of all the Baptized

## Faith Community Models for Engaging the Ministry of All the Baptized

In the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN), we use three primary lenses to help each faith community determine the best model for them.

Every faith community:

1. is fully living into the ministry of all the baptized, manifested in relationship with all four orders of ministry (lay people, deacons, priests and bishops).
2. has discerned their particular gifts and passions and have engaged with their neighbors to determine needs and potential partnerships.
3. has sustainable resources.

We use these lenses to help us think broadly and creatively about the structure of leadership necessary for a faith community to live into its discerned ministry and mission within its walls and within its community.

In this way, we seek to blend roles, empower lay leaders and challenge our sometimes priest-centric propensities.

The best model needs to come from the identity of each unique faith community, the context in which it is found (neighborhood, wider community) and needs to be sustainable – in terms of the financial and human resources available. There is not a hierarchy – no one model is the best – only a best fit given the time, place and gifts of a faith community. This requires faith communities continuously engaging in the hard work of discernment.

Here are a few faith community leadership models in ECMN:

### **Full Time Clergy**

There is a Rector/Vicar/Priest in Charge, full time or part time, with or without additional paid program staff, or with a discerned/formed commissioned team. This model, which used to be the normative one, is changing in seismic proportions. There are a growing number of faith communities across the Episcopal Church engaging priests in part-time positions. As is so often the case, this decision may well be driven by financial realities, but it often offers a wider girth for lay participation out of that same necessity. This is an opportunity to live into the fullness of all the orders.

### **Team Based Ministry**

There is clear faith community decision to engage in a team based ministry –a team of leaders, non-stipendiary ordained and lay people, who are called to particular roles based on their gifts and the needs of the faith community, there may be discerned commissions/committees from within the faith community which promotes wider participation and offers both on-ramps and off-ramps for engagement.

### **Lay Led**

The lay leadership (Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Wardens and/or other committees) provides the day to day administrative, worship and mission activities utilizing a supply priest (or a rota of priests) to be present Sunday for worship; some Sundays may be lay led Morning Prayer.

### **Shared Leadership**

A faith community shares leadership with another faith community. This can be as simple as sharing lay functions (administration, formation, music, etc.) or priests or deacons. This can be an arrangement between Episcopal or Ecumenical partners.

These are the four models, with all the encompassing variations within each, in current use in ECMN. The Holy Spirit will undoubtedly help us see other models and hybrids of those models. It is our work to the hard work of listening to the Holy Spirit