COOPERATIVE PARISH MINISTRY

Cooperative ministry is two or more congregations working together to share their ministry [not simply sharing a pastor or a piece of property- that's a circuit/yoked configuration.]

Just.being.linked.together.does.not.make.us.a.cooperative.ministry¡.Seeing.each.other.as.brothers.and.sisters?worshiping.in.separate.congregations.but.working.together.for.the.cause.of.Christ?does¡

WHAT

- In many cooperative ministries each church retains its own pastor, and each pastor is assigned to a particular church. People in each church identify with the particular pastor appointed to their church and also have access to all the pastors in the cooperative parish.
- The council decides what activities the cooperative parish ministry will work on together. Each church decides what activities they will take part in. Nothing says that everyone has to participate in everything.
- The council meets regularly to plan. Anyone, not just the council members, can be on task forces or ministry teams to help plan specific events and carry them out.

A.Cooperative.Parish.is.NOT…
a way to close churches or prepare to close churches. In fact, it is the opposite.
A Cooperative Parish declares that locations around the county are strategic for ministry and mission, each unique congregation is important, AND allows for everyone's gifts to be deployed with fewer resources.

WHY
The purpose of cooperative ministry is… to help the church minister to all the needs of all the people of the community.

<u>to.help.the.church</u>
-a TOOL, not a ministry in and of itself, but rather a way for the church to be in ministry
-Sometimes people ask, "What will cooperative parish ministry do for my church?" The only truthful answer is "absolutely nothing." But you can do a lot for your church using cooperative ministry.

<u>to.help.the.church.minister</u>
-We are bearers of the Good News-> not just to tell, but to share by ministering to all their needs in whatever places and conditions we find them
-This call comes to the church as a whole and to individuals: we are to minister together, and we are each to minister individually.

<u>to.all.the.needs.of.all.the.people.of.the.community</u>
-We are called to a particular area [a parish]- not just to our members or physical buildings!

United Methodists are CONNECTIONAL- we already do mission and ministry together locally and globally because we work together. A Cooperative Parish is another way to live into our UMC identity.

Cooperative ministry helps us get beyond the powerlessness of feeling alone. When we feel alone we tend to feel powerless, to feel that the forces opposing us are overwhelming. We feel that we can do nothing. Aloneness disempowers us through the very feeling of being alone… the feeling that we have to do it all by ourselves and that we are overcome by it. All this changes when we combine our efforts with others. When we join with others, we find those who have a similar vision and will help us. We escape our aloneness when we become part of a group of Christians working together to serve. We don't have to do it all, just our part that we have been given for this day.

MAJOR BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

Functional

- to do together what we can do better than if we worked separately AND
- to do together what we could not do at all by working alone

Structural

- to give every congregation access to a wide variety of lay and clergy leadership skills, abilities, and experiences AND
- to offer every Christian a greater field of opportunity to live out their personal mission

Spiritual

- to connect all of us as parts of the greater body of the Church so that we are not alone AND
- to allow individual members of participant congregations the opportunity to exercise their unique spiritual gifts and call to ministry in ways that may not have been previously open to them

A.Cooperative.Parish.allows.churches.to.benefit.from.the.gifts.of.a.ministry.team.at.a.lower.cost.with.increased.benefit.and.support*

Examples of Collaborative Ministry:

- Congregational Care Team
- Wider communication and participation in church events
- Mission projects such as Rise Against Hunger or Habitat house build
- Student activities such as: youth group, confirmation classes, Elementary Student gatherings, VBS
- Bible Study sessions across the county
- Sermon support and alignment
- Craft fair
- Support for life stages [How to talk to your adult kids, How to share faith with your grandchildren, Writing a will, Planning a funeral service, Alzheimer's/Dementia understanding]
- Community Special Music Events
- Directory of United Methodists across the county
- Intergenerational Events
- Support for local schools
- Feeding programs
- Facebook group for connection and sharing
- Creation Care Team
- Courageous conversations groups
- Ramp ministry [or other service needs at homes or churches]
- Literacy programs
- BEAR closet: Baby Equipment & Resources closets
- Micro-loan programs
- Grief groups
- Medical loan closets
- Women's prayer breakfast
- Livestreaming and online ministry
- Women's & Men's groups
- Making Chrismons
- Covenant Discipleship Groups
- Parenting support
- Exercise classes
- Craft group
- Scouting programs