

## Ecclesiastical Province of Canada

### Guidelines for Parish-to-Parish Partnerships

#### 1. Introduction

Partnership in mission is at the heart of all relationships, both within the Anglican Communion and throughout the wider church. Parish-to-Parish Partnerships offer to parishes within the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada the opportunity to enter into a closer relationship with another parish in the Province, for a defined and limited period.

The Partnership relationships exist to strengthen each of the partners in ministry and mission. The goal of the partnership is to increase each partner's awareness of the single mission to which they are called, the mission of God in their particular context.

The partnership works to strengthen each partner through:

- mutual encouragement of and prayer for one another
- intensified knowledge of and concern for one another
- exchange of resources, both spiritual and material

It is important that partnerships respect local priorities as established by each partner parish, recognizing that the responsibility for mission in any one place belongs primarily to the local church in that place.

Partnerships have to do with people. In drawing us ever closer to God, Christ makes those who were strangers friends, both with himself and with one another. As friends, we share a common mission and a common life, helping each other and sharing resources. Parish partnerships must be people-oriented, with an emphasis on relationships. They exist for face-to-face mutual support and for the strengthening of mission in each companion's own community. The personal interactions in the partnership should broaden and deepen each partner's understanding of the church's common mission, and allow each partner to learn or re-learn from the other ways of serving, sharing and showing Christ within its own context.

In a partnership relationship, each partner is both a giver and a receiver.

Parish Partnerships are coordinated through the Executive of the Province of Canada, in consultation with the diocesan bishops or their designees, which will attempt to match parishes based on strengths and needs of the parishes.

## 2. Establishing a Parish-to-Parish Partnership

- a. The request must have the full support of the Incumbent and Wardens, and should have been discussed and approved at the Annual General Meeting, Vestry, or similar body, to assure the wide support of the parish.
- b. The request should indicate what resources, experiences and strengths the parish can bring to a partnership, and what the parish hopes to gain from the partnership to enhance its local mission.
- c. The request, together with the endorsement of the diocesan bishop or his/her designee is then sent to the Executive of the Province of Canada. The Executive of the Province will then work to find an appropriate match and advise the two potential partners.
- d. Once parishes are matched, designated representatives shall discuss the feasibility of a partnership, focusing on the needs, expectations, values and culture of each. Each must have a full opportunity to learn what is being proposed, to know the expectations of the other parish, and to discover its own expectations. If either parish feels that they are not a good match, they may report to the Province that they wish to explore a relationship with a different partner.
- e. If the preliminary conversation results in both parishes feeling that a partnership would be beneficial, the representatives shall discuss areas of sharing, which may include:
  1. proclamation and application of the Gospel
  2. Bible study and theological reflections
  3. intercession and worship
  4. dialogue about issues of common concern
  5. dialogue about ecumenical and interfaith relationships
  6. pastoral visits
  7. exchange of leadership resources and training

Partnerships should grow towards standing side-by-side, with and for each other in witness and action.

## 3. Official Formation of the Covenant

- a. A formal covenant shall be drafted between the parishes, outlining:
  1. mutual expectations
  2. the duration of the relationship
  3. mutually agreed-upon activities
  4. process for evaluation at the end of the initial term

The drafting of the covenant should respect cultural differences and processes.

- b. A timetable should be established for steps leading up to the formal inauguration

of the partnership.

- c. An official decision to approve the covenant should be made by the governing body of each partner, according to its own processes and procedures. The bishop of each parish should give his/her consent to the covenant.
- d. The beginning (and ending) of a partnership should be marked liturgically in each of the partner parishes.

#### 4. Developing the Partnership

- a. resources for exchanges of information
  - 1. email, social media, video-conferencing
  - 2. newsletters, parish bulletins
  - 3. audio and video tapes
  - 4. art displays
- b. language: It is beneficial for members of the partner parishes to learn common phrases, passages from the Bible and Prayer Book, and hymns in the language of the other partner. Learning a few basic words and phrases in another language is enjoyable and enriching.
- c. prayer. A common prayer for mission, and a prayer cycle are valuable aids for use by each of the partners as a way of acknowledging partnership with God and with one another in mission. Special intentions for each other should also be highlighted.
- d. study. Materials could be developed (or used from an existing source) for a common Bible study or adult study group, and for youth and children. Topics might include issues of concern to both partners, or the respective cultural, social and economic issues facing each partner.
- e. consultations. The partners should have regularly scheduled consultations, at least yearly, to evaluate the relationship and review the plan for both short- and long-term.
- f. exchange visits. Exchange visits are not contemplated as a normal part of the partnership, giving the difficulties and expense of travel to and from remote communities. If partners do plan to include visits as part of the partnership, the visits should be reciprocal and well planned as to purpose and expectations.

#### 5. Evaluating the Partnership

On an annual (or more frequent basis), each partner should evaluate the partnership, to review:

- a. the development of the partnership relationship since the last review, in light of

- the stated aims and guidelines,
- b. any issues or concerns that have arisen, and
- c. whether or not the partnership should be continued, and, if so, whether the partnership covenant needs to be revised,

While each partner should conduct its own evaluation of the partnership, according to its own structure, procedures and culture, each should seek comments and reactions from the other partner.

A written report of the evaluation should be shared with the other partner, the diocesan bishops or their delegates, and the Province of Canada.

Adapted 2014 from "Guidelines for Canadian Companion Relationships" (Anglican Church of Canada, 2010)