

The Covenant of Shared Ministry of the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish

In order to live more faithfully into our present and our future as a cooperative parish, we have created this covenant to guide our shared ministry.

I. Our Spiritual Foundation

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?...But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-27, 33-34)

As we enter this covenant agreement, there are some fears among our people: loss of identity, loss of control, and the survival of our churches. Many people have a lot invested in both Marvin Memorial and Woodside. Some people have been here for their whole lives. And fear is a natural human response to change.

But our faith in Christ gives us the strength to face all fears and live through change into new life. And our God never changes—God is always faithful.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to spiritual disciplines, to prayer, to studying God’s Word daily, and the means of grace available to us through worship and Holy Communion. And we believe that living into this relationship is itself a spiritual discipline—to see our Christian identity as larger than ourselves, to live together as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to embrace change that can lead to new life.

We have faith and hope that God’s sanctifying grace is transforming us even now; that who we are today is not who we are becoming. Our ultimate hope is that we will one day be a church like those first faithful believers:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (Acts 4:32-35)

II. Statement of Purpose:

For the last six generations, the two congregations that became Marvin Memorial and Woodside United Methodist Churches have been grounded in Christ for mission and ministry in God’s world. Each of our churches was established to be witnesses to the transformative power of Christ’s love and grace in the Woodside and Four Corners neighborhoods. Today, we seek to work together in union through our shared mission in Jesus Christ to reach out to and serve the wider Silver Spring community.

Each day, tens of thousands of people pass by our churches—

- People who are struggling, living on the margins, and homeless, as well as people who have wealth and security and power;
- Seniors with vast life experiences, as well as youth and young adults seeking their identity and way in the world;
- Young adults trying to balance the demands of work and family life and middle aged people worrying about their children going off to college and their aging parents;
- Those who have lived in Silver Spring their whole lives, and immigrants from all over the world who now call Silver Spring their home;

- Those who have spent their whole lives in church, and those who have never walked through the church's doors.

The Silver Spring Cooperative Parish seeks to be a beacon—a visible sign of Christ's presence and power in this community—so that we may make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Through reaching out, caring for and ministering to people, and sharing the Gospel, we will offer a spiritual home for all those who are seeking something more that this world can offer.

We, Marvin Memorial and Woodside United Methodist Churches, need each other. We face similar challenges and opportunities for future ministry and we choose to face them together. We seek to model a new way of living together in the Christian life and ministry, to work together and build relationships with one another, so that we too may be transformed by Christ's grace and mercy that is already at work among us.

III. Objectives

The Silver Spring Cooperative Parish is a dual-site church functioning under the direction of a single unified leadership body with each site established as a center of excellence for specific ministry areas/initiatives as determined by the joint Leadership Council. Our goal is to be an Acts 2 Disciple-Making Congregation as described by the Baltimore-Washington Conference in the strategy to "Strive for Five." Specifically: **Celebrate** (touched by God through Worship), **Connect** (transformed by God through Relationships), **Develop** (Shaped by God through Study and Spiritual Disciplines), **Serve** (Gifted by God to Serve Others), and **Share** (Led by God to be a Witness). Therefore our objectives are to:

- Grow in relationship and commitment to Christ and one another as we come together with unity of purpose to serve in ministry for the good of all within our churches and our community.
- Increase the vitality and health of both churches through the shared gifts and graces of each individual, the shared ministries, and the shared leadership resources.
- Communicate with and educate each individual within our churches regarding the benefits to be obtained from this dual-site ministry, and demonstrate those benefits over the period of the covenant.
- Celebrate the unique stories and gifts of each congregation as we pursue common goals and objectives and as we share ministries and leadership resources.

IV. Timeline & Milestones

Date: January 24, 2010

Milestone: Cooperative Parish Leadership Council Meeting

The effective date at this Covenant of Ministry will be the date of acceptance by the Leadership Council of the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish (Marvin Memorial and Woodside UMCs).

Assessment: April 2010 (exact date TBD) Leadership Council

Assessment: September 2010 (exact date TBD) Leadership Council

Assessment: December 2010 (exact date TBD) Leadership Council

V. Organizational Structure

As of January 1, 2010, all committees and ministry programs (including the Leadership Council, and with the exception of Finance and Trustees Committees) will meet and work cooperatively. An individual congregation may elect to make internal organizational changes as long as those changes do not adversely affect the intent and purpose of this covenant or our dual-site ministry initiative. The Bishop will determine the manner in which the Annual Charge Conference will be held within the Cooperative Parish.

VI. Shared Resources and Ministries

Each congregation within this Covenant of Ministry agrees to freely share resources as ministry opportunities arise. For example, the sharing of facilities, transportation, library resources, and volunteers in ministry is strongly encouraged as a means to leverage the strengths of each church and to explore the full extent of possibilities within this multi-site ministry. Further, each church will strive to identify opportunities for both churches to come together in worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. In this way, we all will become more effective and vital in ministry even as we preserve the unique identity of each congregation.

VII. Financial Considerations

Each Congregation of the Cooperative Parish will adopt a budget outlining their income and expenditures, will have an annual stewardship campaign, and will be responsible for the salary and benefits of clergy and lay staff. Financial information for both Marvin Memorial and Woodside will be shared openly with members of the Cooperative Parish. Each congregation's operating budget will be approved annually by the Cooperative Parish Leadership Council.

VIII. Communication

Clear, open and free flowing communication is integral to our cooperative parish. While we acknowledge that members of both Marvin Memorial and Woodside may experience a certain level of uncertainty and anxiety about the Cooperative Parish, every effort will be made to address these issues in the most effective and transparent manner possible.

We also acknowledge that for this Cooperative Parish to succeed, the responsibility of communicating effectively would rest not only with the relevant bodies within the Cooperative Parish and pastors but also with every member of this Cooperative Parish.

Thus, the Covenant Team shares the following as means of communication between the two churches and its members to disseminate relevant information to foster cooperation and make the ministries more effective.

The methods of communication that would be used by the cooperative parish will address both internal and external communication needs of the Cooperative Parish to fulfill the vision set forth in the Cooperative Covenant.

A. Internal Communication

i. Cooperative Ministry e-News

The existing Cooperative e-Newsletter highlighting the events and updates of both churches will be continued. A Cooperative Ministry Calendar would be included in to the e-Newsletter, this would enable members of the Cooperative Parish to be informed of all events and activities in advance. Every effort will be made to make electronic communication more accessible to non-computer users (i.e., by printing hard copies of the e-Newsletter and making them available). The Cooperative Parish e-Newsletter will be a primary tool of communication that would be used to keep the members informed of cooperative activities.

ii. Bulletin and Worship

The worship bulletins will be used to relate information pertaining to service information and announcements. The current practice of sending out church bulletins to homebound members will also continue. Church service announcements would also be used during worship to disseminate the relevant information.

iii. The Messenger

We are currently making improvements to this printed newsletter to make it more effective as a way of connecting members who do not regularly come to worship and also more invitational to visitors and perspective members.

iv. Church Websites

Individual churches will maintain their respective websites. These websites would be updated regularly to include the most current information regarding the respective churches. In an effort to foster the cooperative relationship, individual church websites should have a link to their sister church's site.

A separate section in the church website will be created to include the church member directory. This link will be devoted to members only and will require secure access through a password protected system.

B. External Communication

v. Silver Spring Cooperative Parish Website (www.silverspringumcp.org)

The Cooperative Parish website will serve to communicate the relationship and shared ministry of the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. It will provide basic information about worship services, Sunday school and other shared ministry opportunities which may be of interest to perspective members. This website will also direct interested users to www.marvinchurch.org and www.woodsideumc.org for more information about the individual congregations.

vi. Signage

Church signage will also be used to promote and attract new members to the Cooperative Parish. In an effort to reach out to a broader audience, we will update information on our existing signs on a regular basis.

vii. The Gazette and free electronic publishing tools

The Cooperative Parish will use all of the available print and electronic media that is cost effective and reaches out to a broader audience.

IX. Silver Spring Cooperative Parish Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibilities |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Lead Pastor | Cooperative position. Lead Pastor for Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting the vision for the cooperative parish - managing the staff - pastoral care - worship leadership - teaching |
| Associate Pastor | Cooperative position. Associate Pastor for Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - young adult leadership - communication within the parish - pastoral care - worship leadership - teaching |
| Director of Christian Education | Cooperative position. Director of Christian Education and Youth Programs. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children's educational programs - UMYF programs - developing and training leaders to assist with education programs |

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| Facilities Manager | Cooperative position. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - managing use of both church buildings - acting as the communication point for all tenants for both buildings - scheduling maintenance contractors for both buildings - maintaining calendar for both Marvin Memorial and Woodside - liaising with Trustees for both Marvin Memorial and Woodside - providing an in-person presence at Marvin Memorial for approximately 20 hours per week; additional 15 hours at Woodside or Marvin Memorial as needed. |
| Office Manager | Cooperative position. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - answering phone calls to both churches - typing bulletins for services at each church - assembling and publishing cooperative parish newsletter - creating/updating content on web sites of both churches - providing an in-person presence at Woodside for approximately 24 hours per week |
| Director of Music | Cooperative position. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinating schedules of all choirs (Chancel, Voices of Praise, Bell, Children's) - managing music staff - controlling music budget - scheduling musicians - scheduling and coordinating special musical events |
| Lay Leaders | Non-cooperative positions. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - getting to know members of the his/her primary congregation - providing worship leadership - representing the interests and views of his/her primary congregation in leadership meetings, while sharing their vision |
| Leadership Council | Cooperative board composed of committee chairs and lay leadership from both congregations. This group is responsible for developing the vision for and making decisions in the best interests of Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. |
| Trustee Committee Chairs | Non-cooperative positions. Responsible for chairing the Trustee Committee, which supervises and maintains all property belonging to his/her primary church. |
| Finance Committee Chairs | Non cooperative positions. Responsible for maintaining the budget for his/her primary church and updating the Leadership Council. |
| Staff Parish Committee Chair | Cooperative position. Responsible for chairing the Staff Parish Committee which is composed of members of both congregations. Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acting as a liaison between the congregation and the staff - Personnel/HR coordination with the Lead and Associate Pastor - Staff evaluations |
| Covenant Team | Cooperative team responsible for developing a Covenant of Ministry. Committee is composed of the Lead and Associate Pastors, and three members each from the Woodside and Marvin Memorial congregations. |

X. Measurable Goals

1. Confession or Reaffirmation of Faith

The Baltimore-Washington Conference goal is one (1) Confession or Reaffirmation of Faith for every 25 worshippers.

Goal:

Marvin Memorial UMC shall receive two (2) new persons per year.

Woodside UMC shall receive eight (8) new persons per year.

2. Average Worship Attendance

Goal:

Each congregation should grow worship attendance each year by 2% of the worshipping congregation. Assumptions: Marvin Memorial has an average attendance of 65 members per week and Woodside has average attendance of 200 members per week.

3. Mission Involvement

The Baltimore-Washington Conference goal is that within five (5) years, 90% of the worshipping congregation is involved in mission work.

Goals:

Marvin Memorial will continue to make sandwiches for Martha's Table in Washington, DC and serve dinner at Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring, MD each month. Woodside will continue to house Arleeta's pantry and serve dinner at Shepherd's Table each month. In addition, the Cooperative Parish will work together on the following mission-oriented events/activities: canned food drives, Help the Homeless Walkathon, Habitat for Humanity, Volunteers in Mission, Youth mission work, Angel Tree projects, meals for the Community Based Shelter, etc.

The Cooperative Parish will continue to support mission involvement through locally identified community and world mission projects such as One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace with Justice Sunday and missionaries currently being supported by both congregations in Africa, Latin America and East Asia.

Fulfill 25% of apportionment giving in 2010 for both congregations and a 10% increase in apportionment giving in 2011 and 2012 for both congregations.

4. Covenant Ministry

Two-year Goals as follows:

- a. **Equipping of Laity** – Develop more individuals in lay ministries of spiritual formation and pastoral care.
- b. **Leadership Development** – Develop and train new and/or existing members in leadership positions within both congregations.
- c. **Stewardship** – Encourage greater and more widespread pledging and an increase in per pledge unit giving especially among members pledging small amounts (for example, some members may be able to move up to \$25 per week instead of \$15 per week with their pledge commitments). Also encourage stewardship of time and talents each year for both congregations.
- d. **Spiritual Formation Involvement** - The Cooperative Parish will strive to double the number of opportunities and the number of participants in activities that focus on spiritual formation of Bible Studies, Prayer fellowship, United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men, small group retreats, short term studies, and opportunities for general fellowship together. A cooperative youth group and adult fellowship group have recently been formed, as well.
- e. **Mission Outreach** – The Cooperative Parish will double the number of opportunities and number of participants in hands-on mission work.

Members of the Cooperative Parish Covenant Team:

Sudila DeSilva, Mary Kautz, Lise Tracey (representing Marvin Memorial)

David Cox, Delores Pinkney, Kyle Whitley (representing Woodside)

Revs. Rachel Cornwell & Kirkland Reynolds, Pastors

This Covenant of Shared Ministry was ratified unanimously by the Cooperative Leadership Council of the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish on January, 24th, 2010.

Signed by the Cooperative Parish Leadership Council Co-Chairs:

Mary Kautz

Mary Kautz

Lenworth Smith Jr.

Lenworth Smith