

Organizational Structure and Duties of Together Here Ministries of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



THE MISSION:

To create space for transformational change through listening, learning, and relationship building among diverse peoples and communities

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

1. Together Here Ministries is a ministry of the Northeastern Minnesota (NEMN) Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and consists of the Bridge Building Task Force, the Anti-Racism Team, an Advisory Board, a part-time stipendiary Coordinator, and a Synod Staff Liaison.
2. The Coordinator will be appointed by the Advisory Board on behalf of Together Here Ministries in consultation with the Synod Liaison. The Coordinator reports to the Synod Staff Liaison and is accountable to the Advisory Board. Members of the Bridge Building Task Force and Anti-Racism Team may self appoint or be recommended by congregational members within NEMN Synod.
3. The Anti-Racism Team and Bridge Building Task Force consult with each other and coordinate ministry efforts when appropriate.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

1. Advisory Board

- a. The Advisory Board will consist of no fewer than eight (8) individuals, up to 50% of whom may sit on either the Bridge Building Task Force or the Anti-Racism Team with roughly equal representation

from both, and the remainder of members being from within NEMN Synod (rostered or lay). It is not a requirement that members of the Bridge Building Task Force and Anti-Racism Team sit on the Advisory Board. As such, the Advisory Board may or may not have members from the Bridge Building Task Force and/or Anti-Racism Team serving on it.

Members of the Advisory Board are recommended by the Bridge Building Task Force, the Anti-Racism Team and/or the Coordinator and approved by the Synod Liaison with attention paid to having culturally and racially diverse membership drawn from the five (5) conferences within the NEMN Synod. Members serve up to four (4) years and may leave their position before their term is up. Members are expected to attend meetings to the best of their ability. Any member who is unable to regularly attend meetings may be asked to reconsider their role in the ministry, exploring partnerships outside membership on the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will meet monthly or more often as necessary.

- b. A chairperson, a recorder, a director of publicity, and a treasurer will be selected from within the Advisory Board.
 - i. The chairperson will coordinate the meeting agendas with the Coordinator.
 - ii. The recorder will make written records of all meetings, keep such records organized, and provide a copy of the record of each monthly meeting to members of the staff of NEMN Synod, the Advisory Board, the Bridge Building Task Force, the Anti-Racism Team, and the Coordinator. The recorder will ensure that records are available upon request. Records of Bridge Building Task Force and Anti-Racism Team meetings will be included in Advisory Board records.
 - iii. The director of publicity will work with the Coordinator to develop and publish materials necessary to ensure timely publicity and correspondence, including maintaining the webpage and social media pages, related to Together Here Ministries.
 - iv. The treasurer will work with the Coordinator and Synod Staff to ensure all financial records are accurate and up to date and ensure that records are available prior to meetings.

- c. The Advisory Board sets the direction for the future of Together Here Ministries by:
 - i. Discerning the ministry needs of the NEMN Synod as they relate to Together Here Ministries, including by not limited to ministry partnerships, sponsorships, and programs.
 - ii. Ensuring works of Together Here Ministries are spiritually grounded and aligned with the mission of Together Here Ministries.
 - iii. Developing and nurturing partnerships with and between congregations of NEMN Synod, acting as a conduit to connect congregations to each other.
 - iv. Developing and nurturing ecumenical relationships, acting as a conduit to connect Together Here Ministries with the ministry work of the Church.
 - v. Developing and nurturing relationships within the ELCA to promote the reconciling work of truth telling and healing.
- d. The Advisory Board, including the Coordinator and Synod Liaison, will develop and monitor the budget for Together Here Ministries, which includes but is not limited to operating expenses and supplies, speaker honoraria, and expected revenues.
- e. The Advisory Board will work closely with the Coordinator.
- f. The Coordinator and Advisory Board will provide the Synod Liaison with written reports quarterly and the NEMN Synod Assembly with a comprehensive written ministry report annually as well as reports more often as requested by the bishop of NEMN Synod or Synod Liaison.

2. Synod Liaison

- a. The Synod Liaison will be a synod staff person appointed by the bishop of NEMN Synod and will promote Together Here Ministries whenever possible.
- b. The Synod Liaison will supervise/advise the Coordinator with input from the Advisory Board as necessary.
- c. The Synod Liaison will attend training events when available.
- d. The Synod Liaison will provide reports to Synod Council quarterly given to them by the Advisory Board on behalf of the Bridge Building

Task Force and Anti-Racism Team.

3. Coordinator

- a. The Coordinator hosts Together Here Ministry events, which includes but is not limited to developing the event format and agenda, sending out information in advance of the event, reserving the meeting place, and negotiating the logistics for the speaker.
- b. The Coordinator tracks ministry progress by working with members of the Advisory Board, the Bridge Building Task Force, and the Anti-Racism Team to monitor trends and events in the NEMN Synod.
- c. The Coordinator works with the treasurer of the Advisory Board to monitor the finances of Together Here Ministry.
- d. The Coordinator is expected to attend the meetings of the Advisory Board, Bridge Building Task Force, and Anti-Racism Team and to furnish an updated report of activities, events, and the cultural climate of NEMN Synod.
- e. The Coordinator will carry out the directives of the Bridge Building Task Force and Anti-Racism Team as communicated by the Advisory Board pertaining to securing speakers, organizing events, and developing and publishing support materials.
- f. The Coordinator, Synod Liaison and Advisory Board will actively pursue grants and other financial resources in order to best live into the mission of Together Here Ministries.
- g. The Coordinator and Advisory Board will attend to all the publicity and correspondence, including overseeing the webpage and social media pages, related to Together Here Ministries.
- h. The Coordinator and Advisory Board will provide the Synod Liaison with written reports quarterly and the NEMN Synod Assembly with a comprehensive written ministry report annually as well as reports more often as requested by the Bishop or Synod Liaison.

- i. Renewal of the Coordinator's role in the ministry work of Together Here Ministries will be reviewed and determined annually or as needed by the Synod Liaison and Advisory Board.

4. Bridge Building Task Force

- a. The Bridge Building Task Force is established by NEMN Synod Resolution 17.1.
- b. The Bridge Building Task Force consists of no fewer than six (6) members, not including the Coordinator and Synod Liaison, with particular effort on including American Indian representation. Members may self appoint or be recommended by congregational members within NEMN Synod. Members of the Bridge Building Task Force can be members of any faith community within the geographical boundaries of NEMN Synod with the majority of the members being members of ELCA congregations. Members serve up to four (4) years and may leave their position before their term is up. Members are expected to attend meetings to the best of their ability. Any member who is unable to regularly attend meetings may be asked to reconsider their role in the ministry, exploring partnerships outside membership on the Bridge Building Task Force. The Bridge Building Task Force will meet monthly or more often as necessary.
- c. A chairperson and a recorder will be selected from within the Bridge Building Task Force. The chairperson will coordinate the meeting agendas with the Coordinator. The recorder will prepare records of all Bridge Building Task Force meetings for report to the Advisory Board.
- d. The Bridge Building Task Force leads, develops, promotes, and/or monitors the ministries of NEMN Synod per Resolution 17.1 by:
 - i. Leading ministries and members of NEMN Synod into acknowledgement of the synod's complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas,
 - ii. Leading ministries and members of NEMN Synod through the continuous and ongoing process of repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery,
 - iii. Leading ministries and members of the NEMN Synod to repentance of the synod's complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas,

- iv. Identifying with tribal elders an appropriate synodical and congregational ceremony of repentance and reconciliation,
 - v. Offering a statement of repentance and reconciliation to Native Nations,
 - vi. Developing resources to help congregations and people understand and reduce the negative impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and its consequences for Native people in Northern Minnesota,
 - vii. Encouraging the development of a renewed strategy for ministry and partnership with Native communities within the NEMN Synod,
 - viii. Working with the NEMN Synod's financial committee to ensure commitment to long-term stable funding of ELCA American Indian/Alaska Native ministries,
 - ix. Promoting efforts with Native communities within which congregations reside, and
 - x. Increasing partnerships with and between congregations to accomplish the tasks listed above.
- e. The Bridge Building Task Force works to increase relationships with and between full communion partners and community organizations to accomplish the tasks provided in Resolution 17-1.
 - f. The Bridge Building Task Force monitors trends and events in the NEMN Synod, reporting this information to the Coordinator and sharing it with ecumenical partners and congregations in appropriate formats and on appropriate platforms such as social media, in congregational announcements and congregational newsletters when relevant.
 - g. The Bridge Building Task Force, using Resolution 17-1 to guide them, will develop and submit to the Advisory Board ministry goals and a strategy through which to achieve said goals no later than February 1st annually.
 - h. The Bridge Building Task Force will provide a copy of all meeting notes to the Advisory Board in a timely manner.
 - i. The Bridge Building Task Force will submit to the Advisory Board summary of review and evaluation of progress toward meeting the year's goals and strategies quarterly.
 - j. The Bridge Building Task Force will submit to the Advisory Board a summary of review and evaluation of previous year's goals and

strategies no later than March 1st annually (or earlier if needed in order to provide Advisory Board information for the annual report presented at the NEMN Synod Assembly).

5. Anti-Racism Team

- a. The Anti-Racism Team is established by a 2020 NEMN Synod Bishop's initiative in response to the death of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others, and with commitment to implement the ELCA's Strategy for Authentic Diversity as adopted by Churchwide Assembly in 2019.
- b. The Anti-Racism Team consists of no fewer than nine (9) members, not including the Coordinator and Synod Liaison, with no less than two-thirds of membership being represented by individuals from socially and racially marginalized communities. Members may self appoint or be recommended by congregational members within NEMN Synod. Members of the Bridge Building Task Force can be members of any faith community within NEMN Synod boundaries with the majority of the members being members of ELCA congregations. Members serve up to four (4) years and may leave their position before their term is up. Members are expected to attend meetings to the best of their ability. Any member who is unable to regularly attend meetings may be asked to reconsider their role in the ministry, exploring partnerships outside membership on the Anti-Racism Team. The Anti-Racism Team will meet monthly or more often as necessary.
- c. A chairperson and a recorder will be selected from within the Anti-Racism Team. The chairperson will coordinate the meeting agendas with the Coordinator. The recorder will prepare records of all Anti-Racism Team meetings for report to the Advisory Board. The Anti-Racism Team will meet monthly or more often as necessary.
- d. The Anti-Racism Team leads, develops, promotes, and/or monitors the Theological Framework, Healing Action, Structural Accountability, Theological Education and Leadership Development, and Partnerships With Full Communion, Ecumenical and Interreligious Partners, and Related Organizations of the ministries of NEMN Synod as they relate to the ELCA's Strategy for Authentic Diversity (the Strategy) by working in partnership with Synod staff and ministry leaders (rostered and lay) to align ministries (congregational and synodical) with the

following recommendations as provided in the Strategy to:

- i. Host learning opportunities for a deeper understanding of the systemic and root causes of historical and contemporary racism and internalized racial oppression and encourage those participating in learning opportunities to write reflection papers, blogs, social media posts, etc. on insights gleaned from those sessions, and share their work within congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization.
- ii. Develop liturgical and teaching resources related to our baptismal covenant, with the need of confession as part of the awareness of naming and addressing racism within the ELCA.
- iii. Provide resources and training for congregational members on white privilege, internalized racial oppression, and cultural humility with intersections in issues of gender, sexuality, class, ability, naturalization status, etc. in a way that is holistic, comprehensive and mutual. Trainings should include:
 1. Work in affinity groups, caucus groups, etc.
 2. Empowerment through an educational process.
 3. Support for gatherings such as the Multicultural Summit.
- iv. Encourage all congregations to learn about their communities and neighborhoods and to develop and implement outreach plans geared toward increasing authentic diversity representative of local race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic class, and ability demographics. (This may require development of tools to aid congregations in this work.
- v. Work with synod staff to:
 1. Provide antiracism training every two to three years to congregational staff and ministers (rostered and lay).
 2. Record, map, and evaluate the efforts of diversity initiatives.
 3. Develop a racial equity assessment process to determine the reinvestment of resources whenever any congregation is in conversation for closure.
 4. Strongly encourage and appropriately prepare predominately white congregations to call rostered ministers of color, particularly women of color, and/or people from marginalized congregations.
 5. Monitor the duration of the call process for people of

color, particularly women of color. The average duration of the call process for white males will serve as a benchmark, and people of color still waiting for call after that amount of time has passed will receive priority.

6. Determine the extent to which all white or predominantly white congregations are implementing goal three of Future Directions 2025 (a welcoming church) and the extent to which they are engaged in outreach to people of color in their geographic location or beyond.
 7. Create an effective networking platform for ministry leaders of color (rostered and lay) in NEMN Synod.
 8. Establish grants to fund work that focuses on strategic authentic diversity.
 9. Develop a communications strategy to highlight efforts toward strategic authentic diversity. This includes alerting mainstream media to the ELCA's shifts in investment toward greater diversity and presenting our written and spoken history in a way that shows the true full diversity within the historical bodies of the ELCA.
 10. Increase the level of intentional engagement with historically ethnic-specific religious communities and establish relationships with historically black denominations.
- vi. Strongly encourage the bishop of NEMN Synod to fill Synod staff positions with ministers of color, particularly women of color.
 - vii. Increase representation of people of color and/or people whose primary language is other than English at synodical committees and on Synod Council.
 - viii. Partner with the Lay Leaders Network to:
 1. Provide lay formation that is culturally responsive.
 2. Develop and institute annual leadership schools of governance that give people of color and persons impacted by poverty—particularly young adults from a diverse range of communities—the opportunity to both learn and affect governance, polity, structure, and practice of the ELCA's three expressions.
 3. Create a pathway for lay congregational leaders of color

to pursue greater leadership opportunities within their congregations and synods.

- ix. Intentionally partner with full communion, ecumenical and interreligious partners on justice, antiracism, and reparations, while also sharing resources and the burden of labor to broaden such work and relationships.
- x. Work with full communion, ecumenical, and interreligious partners to address and name historical and current oppressions and tell the truth about denominational, congregational, and organizational wealth. This includes learning the racial history of our religious partners, with areas of study including but not limited to:
 - 1. Kristallnacht,
 - 2. the massacre of the Mennonite,
 - 3. actions to/with the African-descent community,
 - 4. Salzburgers,
 - 5. communities whose paraments, etc., were purchased by the Ku Klux Klan, and
 - 6. the legacy of slavery.
- e. The Anti-Racism Team works to increase partnerships with and between congregations to accomplish the recommendations provided in the Strategy.
- f. The Anti-Racism Team monitors trends and events in the NEMN Synod, reporting this information to the Coordinator and sharing it with ecumenical partners and congregations in appropriate formats and on appropriate platforms such as social media, in congregational announcements and congregational newsletters when relevant.
- g. The Anti-Racism Team, using the Strategy to guide them, will develop and submit to the Advisory Board ministry goals and a strategy through which to achieve said goals no later than February 1st annually.
- h. The Anti-Racism Team will provide a copy of all meeting notes to the Advisory Board in a timely manner.
- i. The Anti-Racism Team will submit to the Advisory Board summary of review and evaluation of progress toward meeting the year's goals and strategies quarterly.
- j. The Anti-Racism team will submit to the Advisory Board a summary of review and evaluation of previous year's goals and strategies no

later than March 1st annually (or earlier if needed in order to provide Advisory Board information for the annual report presented at the NEMN Synod Assembly).

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