

STAFF CARE TEAM

The purpose of a Staff Support Team is to provide a safe and supportive place for our staff to share their joys, sorrows, needs, and concerns.

This includes:

- Keeping the staff in prayer.
- Promoting good will and healthy relationships among the staff and between the staff and the congregation in order to maximize their effectiveness and build a strong partnership.
- Clarifying expectations and roles that the staff and members of the congregation have of each other. Periodically, they will want to give staff members an opportunity to reflect on their call and the unique skills they bring to the ministry.
- Communicating and interpreting the work of the staff to the congregation so that together they may carry out an effective Christian ministry. This team should help the congregation understand the various duties that are the responsibility of the staff, as well as the priorities for their time and talents.
- Enhancing communication among staff and between staff and congregation through mutual counsel, support, and feedback information. This is not to be seen as a “complaint group,” but rather a place members can give honest and open feedback.
- Encouraging healthy spiritual, physical, relational, and financial practices among staff.
- Providing a healthy process for dealing with conflict.
- Advocating to congregational leaders for adequate housing, working conditions, continuing education, salaries, vacations, health maintenance, sabbaticals, and the like.
- Providing a sounding board when staff is struggling with particular issues. This can also be a good place for testing new ideas or shaping proposals.

This Team must be established with care because its effectiveness is directly related to the level of trust that exists among the staff, between the staff and the committee, and among the staff, Team, and congregation. The people invited to serve on the team should be approved by the Pastors and have the support of the Lay Ministry Team.

Qualifications of the Team

They should:

- Be regular participants in worship and Bible study.
- Be appointed by the Pastors, with the approval of the Lay Ministry Board.
- Have a heart for the well-being of the church staff and their families.
- Have a proven track record of confidentiality.
- Possess a special skill when possible (e.g., social worker, counselor, health care professional, etc.)
- Commit to 6 meetings per year and an annual retreat.

Guidelines

- The Team must consider the personal sharing of staff and Team members as strictly confidential.

- The Team has no authority to set policy or program. It is a sub committee of the Lay Ministry Board.
- This support team is accountable to the Lay Ministry Team, though it does not prepare written reports. Functionally, members of the committee are accountable to each other and to the staff they serve in collegial ministry.
- The Team should be devotional in attitude, seek opportunities to worship and retreat together, and be open and receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Decisions, if any, are normally reached by consensus rather than by majority vote.
- Conflict within the staff or Care Team should be openly considered and resolved during meetings.
- While the Team may influence the setting of salaries, policies, staff evaluations, and various programs, it should not assume authority given to Boards and Committees.
- The work of the Team is not about “doing” but “being” available to listen, reflect, offer counsel and give meaningful support.

Ways to Show Care to the Staff and Family

The Staff Care Team may

- Provide prayer support for the staff and their families.
- Remember special anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays, and encourage the congregation to remember these as well.
- Be present with workers and their families during times of crisis (such as hospitalization).
- Provide a formal welcome for new staff.
- Provide an exit interview as staff is leaving. This might be a way of learning how to improve the quality of support given to workers/families or as a way to bring closure to painful experiences with a congregation.
- Investigate district salary guidelines. Know the history of how the congregation sets salaries and advocate to appropriate boards or voters.
- Remind staff to keep self-care and family first.
- Check with staff to see that they are taking time off. Make certain time off is adequate and understood by congregation. Advocate for appropriate sick leave and a sabbatical leave.

Resource “Holding Up The Prophet’s Hand” by Bruce M. Hartung, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 2011.