Greetings,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Triune God! – The leadership of your congregation should annually take time to pause, reflect and give thanks for the mutual ministry the congregation and your rostered leader(s) (pastor(s) or deacon(s)) share. One of the tools your synod office has available for this time of reflection is the “Mutual Ministry Evaluation”. Before you dive right in, please read the following recommendations from the SD Synod Support to Ministry committee.

1. Ground the entire process in prayer.
2. Remember our church’s sacramental theology; all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but because of the promises in baptism and Holy Communion, it is not our shortcomings that define us but the grace of God alone. We see, treat and speak with each other in such a manner.
3. If there are grievances, your congregation’s constitution, which is your missional document, has provisions for resolving them in C15.01. in a biblical and forthright way. This evaluation tool is not a way to name or solve grievances of your mutual ministry.
4. Use your rostered leader’s letter of call during the process. It outlines the ministry expectations of both the rostered leader as well as the congregation.
5. Keep the process conversational and confidential.
6. The hoped outcome of the process is to be able to look back with thanksgiving as well to look forward to the future with hopeful anticipation.

Above all we keep in mind that all of us are called by God for such a time as this. Your congregation is called by God to be ministry in Christ’s name in the context of your community; the rostered leader(s) is/are called to support and lead God’s people in your particular context for the sake of the ministry in Christ’s name we all share.

Last but not least, please remember that while a pastor is considered an employee of the congregation, as such they annually receive a W-2, they are not hired, but called by the congregation. At the time of the congregational vote to extend a call to the rostered leader, the congregation trusted the call process to be the work of the Holy Spirit. If you should have any questions or concerns regarding the annually mutual ministry evaluation process, please, feel free to reach out to your synod staff by calling … (insert general phone number), and a staff member will be in conversation with you.

In closing the South Dakota Synod’s Support to Ministry committee would like to thank you for your generosity. The giving of your time, skill and sharing of your faith is a gift to the church and the ministry we all share. Thank you and thanks be to God!

Journeying in Christ with you,

South Dakota Synod Mutual Ministry committee