

A Covenant for a Shared Ministry between  
Christ Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
and  
Trinity Episcopal Church, Hampton, New Hampshire

### Purpose of This Covenant

We, the people of Trinity Church, Hampton, and Christ Church, Portsmouth, recognizing that by combining resources we can attract and retain high caliber, experienced clergy, and strengthen and grow both of our communities, hereby enter into this Covenant for a Shared Ministry (hereinafter “Covenant”) to bring new life to our individual communities and to the larger community we are called to serve, through both joint and separate endeavors.

### Shared Ministry

The goal of this Shared Ministry of Trinity Church, Hampton, and Christ Church, Portsmouth is to strengthen and foster the ministry of the participating congregations, and, while appreciating each congregation’s separate voice, identity and history, encourage the sharing of ideas, energy, and resources.

### Mission

The mission of the Shared Ministry of Christ Church, Portsmouth, and Trinity Church, Hampton, is to empower our congregations to more effectively carry out their ministries in the local community and the world by strengthening the corporate life of service, worship, Christian formation, fellowship, evangelism, and pastoral care within the cooperating congregations.

Ways in which we are called to do this include, but are not limited to:

1. The sharing of a Vicar to lead us in worship and encourage us in Christian formation, fellowship, evangelism, and pastoral care.
2. Developing and maintaining creative outreach and advocacy in ways that more effectively bring the Gospel to the larger community we are called to serve.
3. Offering meaningful liturgy and music in each congregation, drawing on the heritage of each while combining strengths where appropriate and desirable.
4. Providing education and formation opportunities for people of all ages in our individual congregations and cooperatively.
5. Increasing our visible presence in the larger Seacoast community.
6. Seeking opportunities to increase fellowship between the congregations through shared meals, fund-raising events, and other activities.

7. Enhancing communication between the congregations and with the community at large, using all available methods.
8. Continuing our cooperative efforts in stewardship and evangelism, using our combined strengths to increase these opportunities for growth.

The Bishop's Committees shall develop achievable and measurable goals, strategies and objectives for fulfilling this mission, and shall solicit feedback and support from both congregations.

### *Affirmations*

1. Christ Church, Portsmouth, and Trinity Church, Hampton, are independent mission congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire.
2. The formation and development of this shared ministry is supported by the Diocese of New Hampshire.
3. Each congregation will share and develop its unique culture and identity.
4. Each congregation will be governed by its own Bishop's Committee in accordance with the articles of incorporation and by-laws of each congregation, and will be responsible for its own budget and for the maintenance of its property.
5. The two Bishop's Committees will hold regular joint meetings, reserving the right to meet separately as needed to provide for matters pertinent only to the individual congregation in question.
6. Each congregation will regularly worship in its accustomed location.
7. Both congregations will seek to discover ways in which their ministries may mutually support and enhance one another and will work together with other congregations as appropriate.

### *Responsibilities*

1. Each congregation will contribute to the cost of supporting our Vicar, as specified in the Vicar's letter of agreement.
2. Each congregation, through the elected members of the Bishop's Committees, will work collaboratively on the scheduling of worship services.
3. Both congregations, through the elected members of the Bishop's Committees, will work collaboratively on the scheduling of joint Bishop's Committee meetings to be held in alternate locations, at Christ Church or Trinity, on a regular schedule.
4. Both congregations will contribute to the cost of supporting our shared Music Director and shared Administrator, as specified in the contracts for these employees and the agreements approved by the Bishop's Committees of both churches.
5. Amendments to or dissolution of this Covenant may be requested by either of the two congregations, as represented by their Bishop's Committees, but changes will take effect only with the consent of both congregations in an annual or special Parish Meeting. If it is determined that the shared ministry must be dissolved, the congregations agree to fund a three-month period of transition to minimize disruptions to the congregations and clergy.

## Duration and Accountability

Both congregations will commit to an initial two-year period for the development of this shared ministry, beginning with the signing of this Covenant. This Covenant may be renewed after two years.

Not later than one year after the adoption of this Covenant, the Bishop's Committees and Vicar shall engage in a Mutual Ministry Review that focuses on the achievement of all goals, strategies and objectives arising out of the provisions of this Covenant. Should the Covenant be renewed beyond the initial two-year period, subsequent Mutual Ministry Reviews shall be scheduled as outlined in the Vicar's letter of agreement.

## Adoption

The Bishop's Committees will distribute this Covenant to the congregations and provide an opportunity for discussion and amendment. Subsequently, the Bishop's Committees will finalize and ratify the Covenant. Finally, it will be submitted to special Parish Meetings in both churches for adoption, with a two-thirds majority of those present necessary for passage. The Covenant shall become effective upon its being signed by the Bishop of New Hampshire.

## Signatures

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Craig Davis, Warden, Christ Church

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Patrice Wood, Senior Warden, Trinity Church

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Burke, Clerk, Christ Church

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Russell Bridle, Clerk, Trinity Church

Accepted by the Bishop and Vicar:

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The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld  
Bishop of New Hampshire

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The Rev. David G. Robinson, Jr., Vicar

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date