



## CUSTOMARY FOR MINISTRY GROUPS August 2022

Thank you for participating in ministry here at Church of the Transfiguration, where our faith in the truth and power of God's love, as expressed most perfectly in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, leads us to seek and serve Christ in all persons. This is the heart of who we are. It shapes us and defines us. We are all, every single last one of us, created by God's love, recipients of that love, and called to share that love with the rest of the world.

In our Catechism, we affirm that "the ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons" (BCP, 855). Lay persons are lifted up first and foremost in this affirmation. In the sacrament of Holy Baptism, each of us receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, together with gifts and graces for ministry. The Catechism goes on to describe that: "The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church" (BCP, 855). Notice the breadth of this responsibility: only a few aspects of ministry have been set aside by God as the specific responsibility of the ordained.

To equip lay ministers at Transfiguration, we have created this Customary. We hope these guidelines will assist our ministry groups and their leaders to better answer our sacred calling to share the creating, liberating, and reconciling love of God with our members, guests, and community.

### Ministry Leadership

*Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. ... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*

Ephesians 4:7, 11-12

Each ministry group at Transfiguration is asked to prayerfully discern and choose a leadership team. The group will prepare a job description for each leadership position, to include term limits and a succession plan. We recommend\* that each ministry include the following positions in its leadership team:

- **A Leader** (or Chair), who convenes the group, sets an agenda for each meeting, recruits new members to the group, and serves as the primary contact person for the group. One

of the most important responsibilities of the Chair is to train the Assistant Chair to step into the Chair's at the conclusion of the her/his term.

- **An Assistant Leader** (or Assistant Chair), who assists the leader with his/her responsibilities and is available to convene and lead the group when the Chair is unavailable. It is anticipated that when the Chair's term is concluded, the Assistant Chair becomes the Chair.
- **A Spiritual Leader**, who begins each meeting with prayer and a spiritual reflection (see below).
- **A Communications Person**, who creates and maintains a Realm group for the ministry, works with staff to promote events, and assists the Leader in sending meeting and event reminders to group members.
- **A Welcome & Hospitality Person**, who assists in recruiting new members, helps orient newcomers to the group and its activities, and follows up when members are absent from meetings. This person also shares any pastoral concerns (for example, when members are absent due to illness) with Transfiguration clergy.

\*In smaller groups, some of these roles may need to be filled by the same person.

Each member of the group's leadership team is required to review this Customary and is asked to participate in leading her or his group accordingly.

### ***Term Limits for Leaders***

Ministries benefit when new leaders are raised up and empowered to lead. Therefore, leaders are asked to step down from their positions after no more than three years. Shorter term limits are acceptable at the discernment of the group as a whole.

### ***Term Limits for Members***

Ministries benefit when new members join, bringing new energy and ideas. We also recognize that, as Jesus' disciples, we are called continually to discern where Jesus is asking us to serve and that comfort in ministry can lead to complacency. We therefore call upon members of all our ministries to discern, annually, whether they are called to remain in a group or to resign (in order to join another existing ministry or, in some cases, to begin a new ministry to meet a need in our community). Members of the clergy are available to meet with ministry group members who seek assistance in this discernment.

## **Scheduling Meetings and Activities**

*"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."*

Hebrews 13:1-2

We believe that God's heart yearns to unite everyone within the arms of God's saving embrace. This is the source and model for hospitality. Ministry groups at Transfiguration should take care to plan their meetings with God's hospitality in mind.

All meetings for church groups must be scheduled through the Church office to ensure groups have access to space, time, set-up, and publicity. Meeting and activities requests are submitted online at: <http://www.transfiguration.net/event-request/>. Using this form, you can request a single date or series of meetings. Make sure you have the time, space and any set-up requirements included in your request. Zoom access can also be arranged with this link; once the meeting or event has been created in our system, an access code will be sent to you to forward to your members.

A note about Zoom meetings: during pandemic, our groups benefitted greatly from Zoom and other online meeting platforms which allowed us to continue to gather and minister to our community during a time when we were not able to be together in person. That said, our work together benefits when we gather together in person, can see one another face-to-face, and are unencumbered by the pitfalls of online meetings (such as technological difficulties). All groups at Transfiguration are strongly encouraged to hold in person meetings regularly.

## **Spirituality of Groups**

*Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*  
Matthew 18:20

Every gathering of Christians is a gathering in which Christ is present. God's very nature is one of continual relationship – an unending dance among three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we pray together with others, we come to know God more fully through participation in this unending dance of love.

In acknowledgement of and gratitude for Christ's presence with us, all meetings (including study, prayer, fellowship, service, and administrative meetings) should begin with an intentional time of prayer or reflection on Scripture. Groups are asked to devote the first 10-15 minutes of each meeting to prayer and theological reflection. This time should be led or facilitated by the Spiritual Leader for the group and must include time for all participants to add their thoughts, reflections, and/or struggles. Please do not approach this portion of the meeting in a perfunctory way; rather, honor the presence of our Savior in our midst with the same reverence we bring to worship.

*The Book of Common Prayer* is an excellent resource, full of prayers for a variety of occasions. Clergy and staff are also able to provide recommendations and support.

## **Maintaining Relationships and Connections**

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*  
1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Here at Transfiguration, we maintain relationships and connections through our database, Realm. This is the single source for our church directory and equips all of us as members of Christ's

Body to manage our relationships effectively. Every member of Transfiguration is given access to Realm through a simple username and password. Each ministry or group is also able to create a “group” within Realm – and these groups are easy to set up, maintain, and use. Through Realm groups, you can email members, share important information, save and share files, and add or delete people.

When new members and guests of Transfiguration indicate interest in a particular group or ministry, our staff frequently will add them to the Realm group in which they’re interested. Thus, communication with your group through Realm is the only way to ensure that you’re communicating with everyone who intends to participate in your group. As a result, groups are strongly encouraged to use Realm.

Video tutorials are available in the resources/files section of the “Parish Council” Realm group. You may also set up an appointment with a staff member to guide you and answer questions.

## **Resources for Groups: Mission, Ministry, and Connections (“MMC”) Committee**

The MMC is one of three major sub-committees of the Vestry. It exists to support our many ministries and to serve as a hub for connecting Transfiguration members to ministries and each other. For example, the committee:

- Holds semi-annual Parish Council meetings to support, inform, and empower ministry leaders. These Saturday morning meets are usually held in February and August;
- Sponsors our annual Ministry Fair to promote and celebrate our many ministries;
- Conducts periodic check-ins with each ministry to stay abreast of their activities and make sure they are supported;
- Guides members toward ministries that support their gifts and passions; and
- Cooperates with parish ministries to recruit volunteers (upon request).

We encourage all groups to connect with this Committee and to work with them as needed.

## **Parish Council**

*Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

We share life together most effectively when we are in regular communication with one another. Honest and direct communication about expectations, upcoming events, and new policies and practices strengthens our communal life. To ensure regular communication, Transfiguration periodically organizes Parish Council meetings, at which the Leader (and, ideally, the Assistant Leader) of each group meet for prayer, learning, and information sharing. At least one representative of each group at Transfiguration is expected to attend these Parish Council meetings and to report back to their group about matters discussed. Each meeting is designed to be informative about the life of the church and to equip and empower you in ministry.

## Ministry Fair

*The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.  
“Catechism” in The Book of Common Prayer, p. 855.*

As our Baptismal Covenant makes clear, all of us are called into ministry in God’s church. Transfiguration holds an annual Ministry Fair to showcase our ministries and to invite new members into them. The Ministry Fair historically has taken place in person (and, if illness and pandemic require, has been hosted via video and Zoom). Each ministry is expected to participate in the Ministry Fair to inform our congregation of their work and to invite new members to join.

## Annual Report

Each January, Transfiguration publishes an Annual Report as required by church canon for distribution to members at our annual meeting. The Annual Report contains brief updates from each of our ministry groups, describing their work over the last year. In addition, any ministry with a budget separate from the parish budget is required to submit their budget for publication in this report. A guideline for report submission is sent to each ministry Leader, together with a due date. Leaders are responsible for submitting their reports in a timely manner to equip staff in assembling the Annual Report.

## Alcohol at Gatherings

*I commend joy, for humanity has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful.  
Ecclesiastes 8:15*

*Woe to the world because of stumbling-blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling-block comes!  
Matthew 18:7*

Groups are asked to keep in mind that many of our members prefer not to consume alcoholic beverages for a variety of reasons. Thus, groups are welcome to serve alcoholic beverages at gatherings as long as they are in compliance with Section V.3 on page 26, of our Parish Policies and Procedures (the “PPP”), a copy of which is available on our website at [www.transfiguration.net/publications](http://www.transfiguration.net/publications).

Groups are particularly encouraged to give attention to the requirement that equally-attractive and immediately-available non-alcoholic options be offered at any gathering at which alcohol is served. This is an act of hospitality. Water, sugared sodas, coffee, and tea are not considered by many non-drinkers to be equally attractive. Unsweetened seltzer waters (poured over ice and served with citrus or cherry), mocktails, and non-alcoholic beers - served in glasses or cups similar to those used for acholic drinks – are much more thoughtful offerings.

## **Group Fundraising**

All sales or fundraising functions by ministry groups must be approved in advance by the Vestry and conducted in accordance with Section I.11 on page 8 of the PPP. Gaining this approval requires advance planning, as Vestry meetings are held monthly (typically on the last Tuesday of the month). While regularly-scheduled fundraisers (such as the annual Fish Fry and Silent Auction) require only a one-time Vestry approval, the Vestry must be notified before each scheduled occurrence of the fundraiser.

## **Safe Church Policies/Communicating with Minors**

All groups are required to familiarize themselves with Section XI on page 41 of the PPP concerning safe church and communications with minors. To the extent a group interacts with minors or other vulnerable people, group members are required regularly to complete safe church training. Key cards to enter the building when it is closed to the public are issued only to members who have completed safe church training and who have passed a background check.