

COOPERATIVE RESOURCE TEAMS – CHURCHES HELPING CHURCHES

Overview

Cooperative Resource Teams (CRTs) represent a new expression of the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church in which churches share their strengths with other churches and learn from other churches. CRTs can be composed of both lay persons and clergy persons. When a church identifies an area of ministry in which it would like to be stronger, it requests a CRT. The team leader contacts the church to clarify the specific need and assembles a team of people with skill in that area to assist the church. There is rarely a cost involved in having a Cooperative Resource Team come into a church.

Team Members

Team members are primarily lay persons. They are people who have gifts and skills in specific areas of ministry such as hospitality, guest follow-up, finances, fund raising, children's ministry, youth ministry, setting up a preschool, leading effective meetings, working with spiritual gift inventories, using Power Point, designing worship services, hiring staff members, advertising, Servant Evangelism, etc. These individuals are identified through the pastors of the churches in the district and other lay persons. They agree to serve on an as-needed basis. They have the right to be involved when it is convenient for them to do so. There is no compensation involved in serving on a CRT. Doing so is an expression of Christian care and a living out of the body life of the church. Team leaders can be either clergy or lay.

Formation of the teams

A team leader is assigned after a church makes a request to the District Office or the District Congregational Transformation Committee. The team leader clarifies the identified need of the church by communicating with one or more of its leaders. The team leader then reviews the list of potential CRT members and assembles a team.

The Work of the CRT

The work of the CRT could consist of as little as one meeting or as much as a year of informal coaching. The CRT could invite members of the requesting church to a workshop, training session or worship service at the home church of one of the CRT members. It is common for the CRT to visit the requesting church to work with members of that church. When the work of the CRT with a particular church is completed, the team is dissolved.

Motivation for Serving on a CRT

CRTs provide an opportunity for people to share their spiritual gifts with others. They allow Christians to help Christians and churches to help churches. There is great satisfaction when one uses his or her spiritual gifts in a God-honoring way.

Cooperative parish ministry addresses many of the stresses faced by churches and many of the challenges of ministry in the 21st Century. It is a model of ministry that offers a great deal to local churches and the Conference. The Conference Task Force on Cooperative Parish Ministry recommends the following steps.