



AARONIC MINISTRIES A Ministry of Presence

Suggestions for Implementing
the New Ministerial Focuses

Community of Christ

Introduction

Aaronic ministers are being called to meet the needs of the church and community as “Ministers of Presence” witnessing for Christ. To that end, new Aaronic priesthood ministerial focuses have been developed for the deacon, priest, and teacher. Each Aaronic priesthood office is being called to express a specific aspect of Jesus’ ministry. The teacher is called to express Jesus’ ministry of “peacemaking.” The priest is called to express Jesus’ ministry of being a “friend.” The deacon is called to express Jesus’ ministry as “comforter.”

To fulfill this vision of Aaronic ministry each jurisdiction and congregation will need to organize and plan for the successful initiation and ongoing support of their Aaronic ministers. The following information is provided as guidance to jurisdictional leaders and the congregational leadership team.

Information about the new ministerial focuses is pre-

sented in a Temple School course titled “Aaronic Ministers: Ministry of Presence.” This course captures the vision for Aaronic ministry in the twenty-first century while reminding us of the historical foundation of Aaronic ministry. We encourage all Aaronic ministers in your jurisdiction and congregations to complete this Temple School course.

Getting Organized

Jurisdiction

The key questions for each jurisdiction to address are; Who will be responsible for implementation? and, What organizational support is needed to initiate these efforts and provide ongoing support?

Who will be responsible?

Most jurisdictions already have a designated bishop or stewardship commissioner who is responsible for Aaronic

ministry. This individual must determine the best way to plan for and implement this important ministry. If a bishop or stewardship commissioner needs assistance, there are several options that can be considered.

Option One: Select one Aaronic minister from each office to serve as coordinators. Their role would be to work with the congregational leadership team in developing the best way to implement and support the new ministerial focuses.

Option Two: Create an Aaronic priesthood council. Its responsibility would be similar to Option One—to work with the congregational leadership team to initiate and support the new ministerial focuses.

Option Three: Set up office-centered teams in the jurisdiction. These can serve many positive functions such as working with congregations in support of Aaronic Ministry, teaching the Temple School course “Aaronic Ministers: Ministry of Presence” and communication of Aaronic events.

These options are not exclusive. You may determine that in your jurisdiction there is a better way to implement these initiatives. The Aaronic Ministries team would like to know about the different ways you have found to implement these new ministerial focuses. Contact us so we can pass on your creative ideas. 1-800-825-2806 ext. 3013, or presidingbishopric@cofchrist.org.

Congregation

The congregational leadership team needs to address the same two questions: Who will be responsible for implementation? What organizational structure will be put in place to initiate the effort and provide ongoing support?

The congregational leadership team should designate one person or one person from each Aaronic office to coordinate the effort. This person(s) should participate on the congregational leadership team and serve as the liaison to the jurisdiction.

Developing A Plan

Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction needs to have an annual Aaronic Ministry Plan. This plan should include some of the following:

- A vision statement for Aaronic ministry

- An accurate understanding of the number of active Aaronic ministers
- A process for engaging the Aaronic priesthood in the Temple School course, “Aaronic Ministers: Ministry of Presence”
- A process for Aaronic ministers to annually complete a ministry plan
- An ongoing assessment of the Aaronic ministry plan’s effectiveness
- Additional activities as planned throughout the year

Congregation

A congregational plan should be developed through broad participation by congregational leaders and Aaronic ministers. It should be concise and action oriented and be integrated into the annual congregational budgeting and planning process. This plan should include some of the following:

- A vision statement for Aaronic ministry in the congregation
- A process to identify the congregation/community needs that are best suited for Aaronic ministry
- A schedule for offering the Temple School course
- A process for annual ministry plans to be completed
- An understanding of how this ministry will receive ongoing support
- Additional activities as planned throughout the year

Conclusion

In recent years the church has developed and declared specific “ministerial focuses” for each of our priesthood ministries:

- Seventy are Ministers of Witness
- Evangelists are Ministers of Blessing
- High Priests are Ministers of Vision
- Elders are Ministers of Mission
- Bishops are Ministers of Generosity

The church now declares that Aaronic ministers are “Ministers of Presence.” May God’s Spirit continue to bless our understanding of how the presence of Aaronic ministry in the lives of our people and our communities guides our journey on the path of discipleship.