

Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*As adopted November 12, 2022
by the Church Council of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

(exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions,
bylaws, and continuing resolutions otherwise in force)

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Part One:
Ministers of Word and Sacrament
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

I. Constitutional description for Ministry of Word and Sacrament and Standards for Ministers of Word and Sacrament`

7.10. MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIZED PEOPLE OF GOD

7.11. This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church.

7.20. MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.21. Within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry, this church calls and ordains qualified persons.

7.22. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.23. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.24. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Sacrament who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.22., 7.23., and 7.31., and related bylaws.

7.25. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution.

7.30. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.31. In accordance with the description stated in 7.22., ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.31.01. **Basic Standards.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- g. membership in a congregation of this church.

7.31.02. **Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;

- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline;
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and the synod; and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationships with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

II. Admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

A. Preparation and Approval

7.31.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
- c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America or completed a program of study for those accepted into the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
- d. completed the expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or have received the waiver described in 7.31.03.d.;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- g. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- h. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

B. Bishop authorization of ordination

The bishop with the power to authorize an ordination is *the bishop of the synod in which a candidate has accepted a call*. That bishop authorizes the ordination, even if the candidate comes from another synod and may have been approved by the multi-synod or synod Candidacy Committee of another synod.

1. **Power to ordain:** According to †S8.12.c. and f. in the *Constitution for Synods*, the bishop of a synod is to: “Exercise solely this church’s power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament;” and “Install (or provide for the installation of)” such pastors.
2. **Jurisdiction:** In receiving and accepting a valid call, the candidate comes under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the synod in which the call was issued. That bishop, on the basis of the record of such a valid call, authorizes the ordination, even if the ordination is to take place on the territory of another synod.
3. **Planning of ordination:** If the ordination is to occur on the territory of another synod (*e.g.*, at a candidate’s home congregation), the bishop who authorizes the ordination *shall* consult with the bishop of the synod on whose territory the ordination may be held *prior to* approving any plans for such an ordination.
 - a. No candidate shall make plans for ordination prior to consultation with the synod bishop under whose authority the candidate is to be ordained.
 - b. If an ordination is planned on the territory of another synod, the *patterns and practices of the synod of jurisdiction shall prevail*. No ordination is to be scheduled without the prior approval of the bishop on whose territory the rite is to occur.
4. **Signing the certificate of ordination:** The bishop authorizing the ordination shall be the bishop who signs the certificate of ordination.

C. Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)

7.31.04. Approval under Other Circumstances. Candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament who by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination in another Lutheran church body, or (c) ordination in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

This policy summarizes the process by which the ELCA approves for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament those individuals “who by reason of... age and prior experience” (churchwide bylaw 7.31.04.) are qualified to participate in an alternate route to ordination. Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) is a program by which the ELCA responds to the missional needs of this church. The program takes into consideration the leadership gifts and ministry skills of a candidate in determining a program of preparation.

Identification of TEEM settings and candidates

Synod bishops have primary responsibility for recommending people who may be suitable for the TEEM program, as well as providing oversight of any TEEM candidate’s preparation process. An ethnic community or churchwide unit may assist the bishop in identifying a person who meets the criteria established for TEEM ministry. Those identified may include a lay mission developer already employed by the church or a person serving in an emerging ministry. It is important to note that TEEM candidates do not self-identify. Synod bishops work with the community where the candidate might be placed in identifying candidates.

[Following is from the Candidacy Manual]

TEEM candidates do not self-identify. Consideration for admittance into the TEEM process begins with the granting of Entrance by a candidacy committee, followed by a recommendation from a synod bishop. The director for candidacy in the Christian Community and Leadership home area then grants acceptance of a candidate into the TEEM process when the criteria for acceptance listed below are met.

1. Criteria for Acceptance into TEEM

A person seeking to complete all the academic and practical requirements for Word and Sacrament ministry through the TEEM process will demonstrate the characteristics of a missional leader as understood through a Lutheran confessional lens (*Candidacy Manual 2.1*). Every candidate participating in the TEEM process must be serving in an emerging ministry site identified by a synod bishop.

2. Emerging Ministries

Emerging ministries of Word and Sacrament communities such as the ones listed below:

1. ethnic-specific, multicultural, or recent immigrant ministries;
2. small membership rural or urban congregations where a synod bishop has had difficulty identifying and placing a candidate for call;
3. new mission starts authorized through normal ELCA processes;
4. congregational renewal ministries authorized through normal ELCA processes; and
5. ministries with people who are differently abled.

3. The TEEM Process

TEEM candidates will complete all the steps in the candidacy process outlined in this manual. A candidate’s admittance into TEEM will occur only after the steps listed below have been completed.

1. A synod bishop provides a letter recommending a candidate for admission into the TEEM process. The bishop’s letter of recommendation must identify a specific ministry site where the candidate will serve. The same ministry site will serve as both the candidate’s teaching parish experience and the location of a supervised internship.
2. The director for candidacy acts to accept the candidate into the TEEM process following the granting of Entrance.

After TEEM candidates complete the academic and practical ministry requirements and are granted Approval by a candidacy committee, they will normally serve their first call in the ministry site originally identified by the synod bishop. Following first call, the opportunities for mobility will be the same as for all ELCA rostered ministers.

4. Steps in Candidacy for TEEM

Candidates for the TEEM process must be granted Entrance by a candidacy committee. In preparation for an Entrance interview, the following are required:

1. Candidacy Application form, Entrance essay, and Entrance Information form;
2. Congregational Registration Form (Communal Discernment);
3. background check;
4. psychological evaluation;
5. personal financial worksheet;
6. personal health assessment;
7. transcripts, licenses, and certificates;
8. when appropriate, evidence of payment of the application fee; and
9. a consent form to release student information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) must be completed by the candidate, at each step of the candidacy process, and shared with the seminary. The form authorizes the seminary to share information with the candidacy committee.

Following the granting of Entrance, a candidacy committee will send the following documentation to the director for candidacy:

1. the Entrance decision form,
2. the Entrance essay, and
3. a bishop's letter of recommendation identifying the ministry site where a candidate will be serving.

After review of the documentation, the director for candidacy will send the synod bishop and the candidacy committee a written notification of acceptance or rejection into TEEM with copies to the candidacy leadership manager. Candidates not accepted into TEEM may continue the candidacy process by applying for admission into a Master of Divinity program at an accredited seminary.

D. Admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of individuals ordained in another Lutheran church or another Christian tradition

7.31.04. Approval under Other Circumstances. Candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament who by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination in another Lutheran church body, or (c) ordination in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

This policy summarizes the principles and process by which the ELCA approves for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament those individuals already ordained for such ministry in another church body. This policy shall apply to those who are resident in the United States as well as those who seek to immigrate to the United States. The process is designed to balance respect for those who have served in other settings with the specific life and needs of the ELCA:

The mission of the ELCA involves worship, nurture, outreach, service, and advocacy for justice. While the scope of this mission is global, its particular focus is on ministry in the United States and the Caribbean. It is essential to have leaders who are familiar with and have experience in the cultural context of the ELCA. Candidates should appreciate and be familiar with ELCA teachings, polity, liturgy, and traditions (Candidacy Manual 5.2).

1. Basic standards for ministers of Word and Sacrament

According to ELCA bylaw 7.31.01., individuals admitted to the ELCA roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall satisfactorily meet and maintain:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- g. membership in a congregation of this church.

2. Role of candidacy committees

Candidacy committees are crucially involved in decisions concerning those seeking admission to the roster. The Candidacy Manual 5.2, "Admission of Applicants in an Ordained Word and Sacrament Ministry in Another Lutheran Church or in Another Christian Church Body," describes procedures for applicants (5.2.2-5.2.4) and clarifies expectations for a range of situations:

- a. Full communion partners: A minister of Word and Sacrament in a full communion partner church seeking to be rostered in the ELCA will have a process followed by a Candidacy Committee. If such a minister has already served in an ELCA congregation, that experience should be acknowledged.
- b. Lutheran World Federation (LWF) partner: A Candidacy Committee may consider the application of a minister of Word and Sacrament in an LWF member church seeking to be rostered in the ELCA. Early consultation with the Service and Justice home area is essential in such cases. Any concerns related to agreements or implications for the churches involved can be identified and considered when there is open communication among the partners. The candidacy process should always include a deep respect for the credentials and background of those seeking to be rostered in the ELCA. Credentials need to be examined to ensure that an applicant has good standing in the partner church and possesses good moral character. For applicants who come from outside the United States, there are additional factors to consider, such as length of time in the United States, familiarity with American culture, and prior service in the ELCA.
- c. Other Lutheran church partners: Ministers of Word and Sacrament in other Lutheran churches should be treated with dignity and respect. The perspective of an individual with such credentials can enrich the ELCA and broaden an understanding of mission. The primary foci of the candidacy process in such situations are evaluation for suitability, screening, and orientation to the ELCA.

- d. Other Christian traditions: Ministers of Word and Sacrament who serve in other Christian traditions may be admitted to the roster of the ELCA if they meet and maintain standards for such ministers and are committed to the confession of faith of this church.

Note that candidacy committees are not involved in the exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament from churches with which the ELCA has an agreement of full communion, where the Guidelines for Orderly Exchange apply; or in short-term or temporary service in congregations or synods performed by ministers of Word and Sacrament in member churches of The Lutheran World Federation. (*See Candidacy Manual 5.2.*)

Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) shall be received by transfer upon acceptance of a valid call from a congregation, Synod Council, or the Church Council of this church following the certification of their status on the roster of the ELCIC, completion of a Rostered Minister Profile, and the approval of the bishop of the synod in which they are to serve.

3. Ordination or reception of the candidate

After a candidate has received and accepted a letter of call, the bishop of the synod of call consults with the Office of the Secretary to determine if ordination is necessary. The ELCA receives as ordained many ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained in other traditions. Those from churches not confessing the faith of the historic ecumenical creeds or those whose authority for ordination was from a single congregation will be ordained according to the ELCA Rite of Ordination. The Office of the Secretary will determine how this policy applies in the case of each candidate.

4. Pastoral care and support

For those who come to the ELCA from other Christian traditions, the beginning of service as an ELCA rostered minister is a time to establish significant relationships for support and growth. During the rostered minister's early years of service, the synod bishop may provide a mentor who supports and nurtures the newly rostered minister.

E. Policy for Ordination in Unusual Circumstances in the ELCA

7.31.08. Ordination in Unusual Circumstances. For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synod bishop may provide for the ordination by another minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of an approved candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. Prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council. The pastoral decision of the synod bishop shall be in accordance with policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

1. Introduction

- a. Ordination to the office of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA is a rite of the church administered according to the practices of this church in order to extend the mission and ministry of the church. It is not a personal privilege to be determined by the candidate.
- b. The purpose of this policy is to describe how a synod bishop may exercise pastoral judgment in unusual circumstances to allow an exception to this church's established ordination practices.
- c. All requests for exceptions to this church's ordination practices shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. Definitions

The term "for pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances" is broadly stated in order to allow the synod bishop and the presiding bishop to use their judgment in evaluating individual cases according to their particular circumstances. However, the following principles should be considered as decisions are made:

- a. The decision should enhance and extend the ministry and mission purposes of this church.
- b. The decision should contribute to the unity of the church.

3. Procedural steps

- a. A candidate for ordination who seeks an exception to the ordination practices of this church will meet promptly after assignment with their bishop of candidacy and the bishop of the synod in which they are being considered for a first call promptly upon entering the First Call process to discuss the candidate's request for an exception, and for the bishop to interpret to the candidate the bishop's concerns. A written statement explaining why a pastoral exception is warranted shall be provided to the synod bishop. The statement shall deal with the principles as stated in 2.a. and b. above.
- b. The synod bishop shall consult with the presiding bishop of the ELCA before granting any such request. The purpose of this consultation is to consider together whether such an exception to this church's ordination practices is consistent with the principles as stated in 2.a. and b. above. After such consultation, the synod bishop shall exercise pastoral judgment and determine whether to authorize the ordination by another pastor of the ELCA. There is no appeal to the synod bishop's decision.
- c. The synod bishop shall seek the advice of Synod Council before granting any such request.
- d. Should emergency circumstances prevent the presence of the synod bishop at an ordination, the bishop may authorize another ELCA bishop or another ELCA pastor to serve as ordinator.
- e. This policy shall be evaluated periodically by the appropriate churchwide unit and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and by the Church Council.

III. Status on the roster

A. Calls for ministers of Word and Sacrament

1. Letters of Call and Service under Call

7.40. CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.41. **Letters of Call.** Letters of call to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.41.01. **Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A19.
- b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.
- c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry appointed by the synod bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.

7.43. **A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be either coterminous with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Sacrament, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.**

- a. Issuance of a letter of call: Ministers of Word and Sacrament serve under call as stated in churchwide bylaw 7.41.01. An average of 15 hours of service per week is the minimum standard for a call to be issued.
- b. Attesting signature: The appropriate synod bishop shall attest the letter of call (provisions †S8.12.e. and †S14.16.c. in the *Constitution for Synods* and provision *C9.04. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*). The bishop's signature confirms only that the call process has been followed, that the letter of call was properly extended, and that the minister of Word and Sacrament or candidate is eligible to accept the call.

2. Initial Call to Congregational Service/Exceptions

7.41.02. Initial Call to Congregational Service. Because the responsibilities of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament, initial service of at least three years shall be in a congregation of this church or, with the approval of the synod bishop, a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists. Exceptions to the three-year requirement may be granted under criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Requests for exceptions to the three-year requirement must be reviewed by the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops. The Roster Committee will present its recommendation to the Conference of Bishops for approval/denial of the request. (*See Appendix H for Roster Committee considerations.*)
 - 1) The bishop of the synod that desires to issue an initial call to a candidate for non-congregational service initiates the request to the Roster Committee.
 - 2) The request must include:
 - a) a statement by the candidate outlining the circumstances and reasons for the request and how it will meet the Word and Sacrament ministry needs of this church;
 - b) a letter from the synod bishop explaining the need for Word and Sacrament ministry in this context;
 - c) a statement from the synod-related institution or organization that is seeking the person for service;
 - d) action by the Synod Council indicating a willingness to issue a call if approved by the Conference of Bishops; and
 - e) written concurrence from the synod candidacy committee.
- b. While the bylaw regarding the “Initial Call to Congregational Service” presumes this is for candidates seeking a first call, candidates who received an initial call to congregational service but are seeking another call to non-congregational service prior to the completion of three years of service in a congregational setting must also request an exception in the same manner outlined above in paragraph a., omitting a.2.e).
- c. In rare circumstances, exceptions to the initial call to congregational service may be approved by the Roster Committee and reported to the Conference of Bishops for ratification.
- d. The Service and Justice unit (for global mission calls) and the senior director for federal chaplaincy within the Christian Community and Leadership unit (for federal chaplaincy calls) may seek an initial call for candidates or a subsequent call for ministers of Word and Sacrament who have not completed the expected initial three years of congregational service.
 - 1) The executive director for service and justice (or designee) or the senior director for federal chaplaincy initiates the request to the Roster Committee. Requests must include evidence of consultation with the home synod bishop.
 - 2) The request must include:
 - a) a statement by the candidate/minister for Word and Sacrament outlining the circumstances and reasons for the request and how it will meet the Word and Sacrament ministry needs of this church;
 - b) a letter from the executive director for service and justice (or designee) or senior director for federal chaplaincy ministries explaining the need for Word and Sacrament ministry in this context;
 - c) a letter from the bishop of the synod that will receive/retain this candidate/minister of Word and Sacrament onto its roster.
 - 3) By decision of the Conference of Bishops [CB92.10.48], exceptions to the initial call to congregational service for global mission and federal chaplaincy may be approved by the Roster Committee and reported to the Conference of Bishops for ratification.
- e. Service as a mission developer shall be considered as congregational service under the terms of bylaw 7.41.02. when such service is approved by the synod bishop and the executive director of the Christian Community and Leadership unit and a call has been issued by the Synod Council where the mission development is located.

3. Sources of Calls

7.44.A19. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

- 1) A “call” is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the “Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament,” through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a “letter of call.”
- 2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.
- 3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.
- 4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.
- 5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church’s care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament

	Setting	Calling Body
1.0	Congregational ministry	
1.1	Single congregation	Congregation meeting
	1.11 Pastor	
	1.12 Senior Pastor	
	1.13 Associate/assistant pastor	
	1.14 Co-pastor	
	1.15 Shared-time pastor	
1.2	Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal
	1.21 Pastor	One of the participating congregations
	1.22 Other pastoral arrangements	One of the participating congregations
1.3	Coalition and cluster ministry	Synod Council
1.4	Congregations beyond this church	
	1.41 Independent Lutheran congregation	Synod Council
	1.42 Overseas independent Lutheran congregation	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
	1.43 Full communion congregation	Synod Council
	1.44 Other	Synod Council or Church Council
	1.5 Interim pastor	Synod Council
	1.6 Pastor in a synod-authorized ministry	Synod Council
2.0	Synod ministry	
	2.1 Bishop	Synod Assembly
	2.2 Assistant to bishop	Synod Council
	2.3 Shared staff by two or more synods	Synod Council of one of the participating synods

2.4	<i>Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
3.0	<i>Regional ministry</i>	
3.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
3.2	<i>Shared synod-churchwide staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.0	<i>Churchwide ministry</i>	
4.1	<i>Presiding bishop and secretary</i>	<i>Churchwide Assembly</i>
4.2	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.3	<i>Staff of the churchwide organization</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
5.0	<i>Chaplaincy and institutional ministry</i>	
5.1	<i>Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
5.2	<i>Institution/agency related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
5.3	<i>ELCA-related institution/agency</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
5.4	<i>Federal agency/institution</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
5.5	<i>Military</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
6.0	<i>Campus ministry</i>	
6.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
7.0	<i>Outdoor ministry</i>	
7.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.0	<i>Ecumenical ministry</i>	
8.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
8.3	<i>National/international organization</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
9.0	<i>Inter-Lutheran ministry</i>	
9.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
9.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
9.3	<i>National/International</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
10.0	<i>Educational ministry</i>	
10.1	<i>ELCA-related seminary chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.2	<i>Chaplain/faculty/administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.3	<i>ELCA-related college chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.4	<i>Chaplain/faculty/administrator of a college unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>

10.5	<i>ELCA-related school chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located</i>
10.6	<i>Chaplain/faculty of a school unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which school is located</i>
10.7	<i>Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit</i>	<i>Synod Council in which the main office of center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.0	<i>Missionary ministry</i>	
11.1	<i>Outside United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.2	<i>Within United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
12.0	<i>Independent Lutheran Organization</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
13.0	<i>Separately Incorporated Ministry</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
14.0	<i>Other</i>	
14.1	<i>Non-stipendiary service under call</i>	<i>Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops</i>
14.2	<i>Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)</i>	<i>Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops</i>

a. Calls to Non-Congregational Service

7.41.03. Calls to Non-Congregational Service. Calls to serve in institutions, agencies, and other entities inside and outside this church may be extended where there is an identifiable relationship of the work to the purpose of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls involve, for example, the care of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and activities closely associated with those tasks including oversight in the church and in inter-Lutheran and inter-church agencies and institutions. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience or status. Synod councils and the Church Council may seek the advice of the Conference of Bishops in specific situations.

- 1) The decision on the source of call is determined in accord with ELCA continuing resolution 7.44.A19.a. As the calling source for calls to non-congregational service, the Synod Council or Church Council must decide if the proposed call is appropriate. The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops may be consulted.
- 2) The synod in which the institution, agency, or other employing entity is located should be the synod that issues the call to non-congregational service. In the case of ministries/agencies that are multi-synod, the bishops involved should collectively decide which synod should issue the call.
- 3) The bishop of the synod in which the minister being called is rostered should be consulted before a Church Council call to non-congregational service is issued.
- 4) Each rostered minister is required to report annually to the bishop of the synod in which the person is rostered.
- 5) Those under call to non-congregational service in predecessor church bodies were received onto the ELCA roster (7.41.06.) but came under annual review through the report form provided by and submitted to the synod bishop.
- 6) Responsibility for oversight of such non-congregational calls should be noted in the minutes of the appropriate Synod Council or Church Council.
- 7) Note churchwide constitutional provision 7.42. regarding rostering of individuals in non-congregational calls:
Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:
...
 - b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Sacrament; [or]
 - c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council. ...
- 8) A minister who receives a letter of call issued by the Church Council normally shall remain on the roster of the synod in which she or he served prior to receiving the call through the Church Council. Specific exceptions exist, as noted in provision 7.42.:
Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:
...
 - d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synod bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;
 - e. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a call to federal chaplaincy or on the roster of the synod of current address, if approved by the synod bishop and received by the Synod Council. ...
- 9) ELCA bylaw 7.42.01. indicates:
If the service of a minister of Word and Sacrament who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.42.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 10) ELCA bylaw 7.42.02. provides:
In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of roster status of a minister of Word and Sacrament serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

b. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call

7.41.04. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

1) Definition and criteria for Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call

- a) Non-stipendiary ministry in the ELCA is understood to be service as a rostered minister either without compensation, for reimbursed expenses only, or for a token stipend that is significantly below the typical salary received for similar ministry.
- b) Non-stipendiary calls are not eligible for participation in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program; therefore, such non-stipendiary service is possible only when there is clear evidence that the minister of Word and Sacrament has adequate alternative income and health insurance.
- c) A letter of call to non-stipendiary ministry in the ELCA may be issued only by a Synod Council following approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- d) The minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a non-stipendiary call shall be accountable to the synod bishop and Synod Council in carrying out this ministry.
- e) A call to non-stipendiary service shall be a one-year term call that may be renewed by the Synod Council only on the basis of the satisfactory fulfillment of the established criteria enumerated below.
- f) A call to non-stipendiary ministry neither qualifies as an initial call to congregational service required for ordination nor does it imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation to the Synod Council. (*See ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.43. and bylaw 7.43.01.*)
- g) The criteria under which a Synod Council may issue a letter of call to a minister of Word and Sacrament for non-stipendiary service include the following:
 - i. There shall be a clearly defined statement of the need for this minister to provide for Word and Sacrament ministry in the synod and a rationale for this call to be for non-stipendiary service, including an annual ministry plan;
 - ii. The minimum commitment by the minister of Word and Sacrament shall be a monthly average of 15 hours per week to the ministry to which called.

2) Action by the synod bishop and Synod Council

When the synod bishop and Synod Council believe that the criteria for a non-stipendiary letter of call are met by a specific ministry, the Synod Council may propose by a majority vote a letter of call.

- a) The Synod Council must determine that a call to non-stipendiary service is extended in order to carry out a specific ministry on behalf of the synod.
- b) The Synod Council forwards its request for a call, together with the rationale for issuing the call to non-stipendiary service, to the Conference of Bishops.
- c) The Conference of Bishops takes action to approve or deny the request.
- d) Should the Conference of Bishops approve the request and the Synod Council issue the call, the Synod Council will conduct an annual review of the non-stipendiary call.
- e) Annual Synod Council action is required in order to continue the call to non-stipendiary service.

3) Action by the Conference of Bishops

The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops receives all requests from synod councils for calls to non-stipendiary service.

- a) The Roster Committee reviews these requests and reports its recommendations to the Conference of Bishops.
- b) The Conference of Bishops, in a regular meeting of the conference, by a majority vote acts upon requests for calls to non-stipendiary service. It reports its decision to the synod seeking such approval.
- c) When approval is given by the Conference of Bishops, the Synod Council may proceed to issue a letter of call to non-stipendiary service and may annually renew such a call without subsequent action by the Conference of Bishops.

c. Shared-time ministries

7.41.01. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A19. ...

1) Definition of shared-time ministry

The ELCA understands shared-time ministry to exist when a rostered minister is called to serve in one or more settings of this church while earning income from other employment or while devoting substantial time to other activities. Some examples of contexts and settings for which shared-time ministries may be appropriate are:

- *Small-membership congregations* with significant opportunities for mission and service.
- *New ministries* so limited in size or slow in development that they would require a disproportionate and unwise investment of time and money, if the more typical mission-development approach were employed.
- *Ministries* (e.g., *inner city, ethnic, and rural*) where the community's expectation is that the rostered minister will receive primary financial support from secular employment.
- *Multi-staff congregations* looking for ministry specialties, in addition to the services of rostered ministers and contracted laypersons.
- *Parishes that would benefit from having two or more individuals serving a single congregation or multiple congregations* but that cannot afford full-time salaries for several individuals.
- *Specialized pastoral or ministry needs* of institutions and agencies that may call for a high degree of training and skill but that may neither warrant investment of appropriate full-time salary nor justify the engagement of a full-time staff person in that position.

2) Criteria for shared-time ministry

- a) Individuals eligible for shared-time ministry must be on the roster of this church or have been recently approved for initial call. Initial calls to Ministry of Word and Sacrament normally are in a congregational setting.
- b) Experienced individuals, whose ability to work in complex settings has already been tested, are preferred.
- c) A minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in shared-time ministry shall have a significant responsibility for a ministry of Word and Sacrament in a congregation, institution, or other expression of this church (*churchwide bylaws 7.41.01. and 7.41.03.*).
- d) A rostered minister may be under call to only ONE church entity. Other employment is by agreement, not under call.
- e) The work-load for the call must be no less than an average of 15 hours per week.
- f) Compensation shall be commensurate with synod compensation guidelines that apply to individuals in full-time positions.
- g) Any contemplated non-church employment for the rostered minister shall be subject to the review and approval of the synod bishop.
- h) Part-time reserve component military chaplaincy alone does not normally meet the threshold for minimum work-load hours as a shared-time call.

3) Procedures for call to shared-time ministry

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides principles and procedures for the calling of ministers of Word and Sacrament (churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A19.). In addition to the regular procedures, a letter of call for shared-time ministry shall include the following:

- a) The range of duties and responsibilities shall be specified by adding appendices to the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities," related to the letter of call (*C9.09.).
- i. If a minister of Word and Sacrament is called as the only pastor of a congregation, it shall be to the full range of such duties. If the call is to a congregational staff position, the shared-time pastor shall have significant responsibility for preaching and administration of the sacraments.
- ii. If a minister of Word and Sacrament is called to a ministry in a non-congregational setting, specialization of function may be appropriate, provided opportunity for Word and Sacrament ministry is included.
- b) The decision to seek a shared-time pastor shall be based upon a study of mission and ministry needs in the particular setting. Appropriate synod or churchwide leaders must participate in the study and decision.

- c) A periodic evaluation by the calling entity shall be encouraged by the appropriate synod bishop or churchwide leaders so that the called person is held accountable for the ministry in that particular situation. The calling entity is accountable for adequate professional and financial support.
- d) Any exceptions to the guidelines governing time and compensation must be requested from the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

4) Appropriate candidates for shared-time ministry

Shared-time ministry demands the ability to use time efficiently, the flexibility to adjust to altering circumstances, and the willingness to make a positive contribution to church and society through secular employment or other interests. The effective shared-time leader has a clear sense of personal ministry and professional integrity. He or she has a concept of ministry that values extensive shared leadership with laity.

It is appropriate for ministers of Word and Sacrament to offer themselves for shared-time ministry, as with all specific ministries, on the basis of their own sense of vocation and their sense of the needs of this church. It is not appropriate, however, for this dual-vocational interest to take priority over the mission needs of this church.

5) Support and accountability in shared-time ministry

The nature of shared-time ministry requires that the employing entity pay particular attention to such matters as compensation and benefits, setting of non-working times for meetings, and specifying shared expectations, which acknowledge the special dynamics of this style of ministry.

- a) Accountability of the shared-time person is the same as with all rostered ministers.
- b) Evaluation of the ministry should be based upon the stated goals and conditions established for that ministry at the time of call.
- c) The entity of this church that calls the individual will review the ministry annually to evaluate the ongoing appropriateness of the shared-time style for that particular mission opportunity.

d. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances

7.41.05. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances. When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ministers of Word and Sacrament may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. A call to serve in unusual circumstances is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council or Church Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

- 1) Requests to serve under “Unusual Circumstances” are submitted to the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops by the rostered minister’s bishop. The request should include a letter from the rostered minister describing the reasons for making this request and a letter from the bishop that supports this request.
- 2) The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops must first determine that the proposed call does not fall within any other category of call available in the church and only then shall determine the appropriate source of call.
- 3) The appropriateness of a potential call to serve in unusual circumstances should be examined using the following questions:
 - a) Does the proposed call advance the interest of the church in the care of the gospel?
 - b) What aspects of the position require that the worker be a minister of Word and Sacrament?
 - c) How would a minister of Word and Sacrament serving in this position provide a distinct advantage for this church?
 - d) Is there adequate provision for ecclesial accountability by the minister to the synod bishop?
 - e) Is there realistic potential for abuse of the call for the personal or financial benefit of the minister or for business advantage?

e. Interim ministry

7.41.01. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

...

c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry appointed by the synod bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.

†S14.23. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the congregation records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

1) Congregations in transition

- a) Because of the importance of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the ELCA seeks to ensure appropriate pastoral leadership for congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy. Interim ministry is provided by synods during the time of transition following the completion of service by the congregation's former pastor and prior to the calling of a new pastor. This is also provided for in a congregation served by a multiple staff when a congregation's senior pastor leaves, or when an associate pastor or other pastoral staff leaves. The interim period is thus a time in which pastoral care is arranged for a congregation by the synod as the congregation moves through a process of self-study and change toward new pastoral leadership.
- b) The synod bishop arranges for the congregation to receive Word and Sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor.
- c) A congregation in a situation of significant concerns and stress related to a pastoral transition may benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include the transition following a long pastorate, a congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or a changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the synod, or a transition marked by significant discord or upheaval within a congregation.

2) Appointment

- a) An interim pastor is appointed by the synod bishop (*see *C9.06. above*) and may serve under a term call extended by the Synod Council. (*See bylaw 7.41.01.c. above.*)
 - i. Calls to interim ministry may not be extended by a congregation.
 - ii. A pastor serving under appointment by the bishop serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement.
- b) Unless previously agreed to by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served during this time of transition and shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor (**C9.07. in the Model Constitution for Congregations*).

3) Guidelines for called interim pastoral ministry

- a) Initial issuance of a call to interim ministry by the Synod Council shall be upon the recommendation of the synod bishop.
- b) A called interim pastor shall serve under contract with a congregation, providing a minimum of 15 hours per week to the congregation and be compensated in accordance with synod guidelines. The initial interim ministry agreement with a congregation may be reviewed by the bishop or synod staff prior to the acceptance of the contractual arrangement by the interim pastor.
 - i. A call to interim ministry shall be primarily for the benefit of the congregation served, not for the status of the minister of Word and Sacrament.
 - ii. Such a call is issued by the Synod Council and may be either a term call to a specific congregation or a term call to interim ministry in the synod.
- c) Prior to being eligible for a call to interim ministry, the pastor shall normally receive appropriate training for interim ministry. The appropriate churchwide unit will review interim ministry training programs and serve as consultant to synods in evaluating such programs.
- d) Only pastors who have served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years are eligible to serve in a called interim ministry.
- e) In issuing a call to interim ministry, the synod assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.43.).
 - i. Compensation and benefits are normally provided entirely by the congregation or ministry setting being served. Where possible, continuation of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program will be advocated by the synod.
 - ii. It is explicitly understood that the synod is the calling body and not the employer of record at any time during the service of an interim pastor under call from the Synod Council.
- f) Calls to interim service within a synod may be issued for a one-year to three-year term of service, with an annual review by the Synod Council or its designated committee.
 - i. If a pastor under a term call to interim ministry has not served in a congregation during the preceding 12 months, however, the call shall be terminated by the Synod Council.
 - ii. A term letter of call issued by the Synod Council may also be coterminous with the duration of service within the congregation served (*ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.43.*).
 - iii. The term call may be terminated by action of the Synod Council.

4) Guidelines for appointed interim ministry

- a) An appointed interim pastor is authorized to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to a congregation by the synod bishop with the concurrence of the Congregation Council or congregation.
 - i. The interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor.
 - ii. The appointed interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the synod bishop (†S14.23. in the *Constitution for Synods*).
- b) A retired pastor or pastor on leave from call who serves an interim ministry is recommended by the bishop and signs an interim ministry agreement with the congregation which provides for the compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry.

f. Ecclesiastical endorsement for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education (MCPCCE)

Background: *This resource is intended for use by synod bishops and synod staff in working with individuals considering service in a ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education. Following all other applicable call guidelines, a synod may issue a letter of call to a rostered minister to serve in such ministries even if that person does not have ecclesiastical endorsement or professional certification. However, synods are encouraged to seek endorsed and certified individuals for such ministries. Those individuals serving in these ministries who are not endorsed and certified should be encouraged and supported to seek MCPCCE ecclesiastical endorsement. This section describes both the values and limitations of such endorsement and certification as well as an overview of the process.*

Introduction

The ecclesiastical endorsement process in the ELCA for ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education (MCPCCE) provides the basis for a recommendation to the synod bishop and Synod Council concerning a rostered minister’s suitability, readiness, aptitude, pastoral identity and competence, and theological integration for a particular ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical pastoral education. The professional certification process follows ecclesiastical endorsement.

1) Definition of ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification

- a) Professional certification: The recognition by a professional chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical pastoral education organization that a person has met a level of professional competence of ministry in a specific setting.
- b) Ecclesiastical endorsement: The recognition that a rostered minister has met ELCA endorsement standards for theological and pastoral competence to serve in ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is a necessary pre-requisite for certification by a professional organization. Ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification are both normally required by an employing agency/institution. ELCA rostered ministers who seek ecclesiastical endorsement are expected to seek and obtain professional certification.

The MCPCCE program is located in the Christian Community and Leadership unit.

Ecclesiastical endorsement for federal chaplaincies is required for a minister of Word and Sacrament to apply for positions in the Departments of Defense (military), Veterans Affairs (VA), Justice (Bureau of Prisons) and any other federal departments, agencies, bureaus, and services. Each federal department establishes minimum standards for applicants to apply, and all require a valid, current ecclesiastical endorsement specifically for chaplaincy service in that department. Applications for ecclesiastical endorsement for federal chaplaincy are obtained through the Christian Community and Leadership unit, senior director for federal chaplaincy.

The following are recognized professional organizations:

Association of Professional Chaplains (APC); American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC); American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT); American Psychological Association (APA); Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE); American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA); National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC); National Association of Certified Mental Health Counselors (NACMHC); Association of Certified Social Workers (ACSW).

2) MCPCCE endorsement process

The document “Endorsement Standards and Procedures, Call Criteria and Program Guidelines for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education” (ELCA.org/Resources/Specialized-Pastoral-Care):

- Establishes standards for theological and pastoral competence for ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education
- Sets forth criteria for calls and appointments to ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education
- Presents guidelines for pastoral ministry programs in all affiliated or recognized social ministry organizations

Based upon material submitted by the candidate and a meeting with a consultation committee, a recommendation is provided to the synod bishop regarding the readiness of the rostered minister for a specific ministry. The synod bishop and the Synod Council have sole authority to grant or revoke the ecclesiastical endorsement.

- 3) Values of ecclesiastical endorsement
 - a) Seeks to establish accountability between individuals serving in the area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education and their respective judicatories and to emphasize the importance of appropriate conduct and practice of those who serve in these ministries.
 - b) Seeks to emphasize the importance of ecclesiastical endorsement in a synod's consideration of a call to service in one of these ministries.
 - c) Enables synod councils to issue a term call that permits a non-endorsed candidate engaging in the ecclesiastical endorsement process to serve while completing the endorsement process.
 - d) Provides a standard set of expectations for rostered ministers who seek to serve in a specific area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.

- 4) Endorsement consultation outcomes
 - a) Renders an assessment of the readiness, pastoral competence, and theological integration of rostered ministers who seek to enter a specific field of ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.
 - b) Utilizes the professional gifts of rostered ministers who have long ministered in a specific area to assist in rendering a professional recommendation for ecclesiastical endorsement.
 - c) Renders a recommendation on the professional pastoral competence of candidates to employing agencies and institutions that seek to meet national professional accreditation standards.
 - d) Serves as a referral source and consultation to bishops and seeks to provide resources for rostered ministers exploring vocational and training options in the area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.

- 5) Limitations of ecclesiastical endorsement
 - a) Does not imply or guarantee that professional certification will be achieved or that a call to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education will be issued.
 - b) Does not establish an employment, agency, or supervisory relationship between the endorsing synod and the rostered minister receiving the endorsement.
 - c) Does not imply or assure that the endorsed individual has undergone any background or reference checks, screening, psychological testing, or evaluation as part of the ecclesiastical endorsement process.

- 6) Initiating the ELCA ecclesiastical endorsement process

When a rostered minister contacts the synod regarding the ecclesiastical endorsement process, or when a synod is considering issuing a call to a ministry within the synod of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education, questions related to ecclesiastical endorsement in the ELCA or for military, VA, or federal corrections applications may be directed to the senior director for federal chaplaincy in the Christian Community and Leadership unit.

Any individual seeking ecclesiastical endorsement for a federal chaplaincy will contact the senior director for federal chaplaincy in the Christian Community and Leadership unit. The application from the individual requires a letter from the synod bishop on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed.

g. Military service

Involuntary call-up for military chaplains is a term applied: (a) to a reserve component chaplain who is assigned to a reserve unit that is activated for federal duty, or (b) to an individual reserve chaplain who is called to active duty when he or she has not requested it. The suggestions provided here for chaplains serving under call to congregations may be used as guidance for other employing entities, institutions, or agencies where ministers are serving under call outside of the congregational setting.

1) Procedures for pastors

- a) If you have not already done so, make your congregation aware of your status as a military reservist.
- b) Notify your Congregation Council president and Executive Committee and arrange for a meeting with the Congregation Council to discuss your involuntary call-up to military service.
- c) Notify your synod bishop and invite the bishop or a member of the bishop's staff to participate in the Congregation Council meeting where the issues related to your call-up will be considered.
- d) Contact the ELCA senior director for federal chaplaincy.
- e) Contact the Board of Pensions of the ELCA (hereafter referred to as Portico Benefit Services) for essential ELCA Retirement Plan and ELCA Health Benefits Plan information.
- f) Note that no new ecclesiastical endorsement is necessary in order for you to respond to the call-up.

2) Considerations for congregations

- a) The federal Uniformed Service Employment and Re-employment Act (USERRA) was passed in 1994 to encourage military service by making it easier for service personnel to return to civilian life after duty. While it is doubtful that this law is directly applicable to pastors under call to congregations, efforts should be made to ensure that ministers of Word and Sacrament are not placed at a disadvantage by their involuntary call-up.
- b) For a call-up of 18 months or less, a leave of absence should be granted to the pastor by the Congregation Council. The synod should assist the congregation in arranging for interim or supply pastoral care during the leave of absence.
- c) If the call-up extends for more than 18 months, the situation should be reviewed and possibly renegotiated. The leave of absence may be extended, or the pastor could submit a letter of resignation, allowing a new pastor to be called by the congregation.
- d) The salary of the pastor should continue until military pay is received by the pastor or the pastor's family.
- e) Although the congregation cannot sponsor the pastor in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program during her/his active-duty service, the congregation should continue the health benefits coverage of the pastor and the pastor's family until health benefits coverage is provided by the military. If the congregation does not continue the health benefits coverage, USERRA does give employees on leave the right to continue their health insurance for 18 months at their own expense.
- f) The congregation should consider accumulating make-up contributions for the pastor's ELCA Retirement Plan account for at least the 18 months of the leave of absence. It is necessary to confer with Portico Benefit Services to determine what is appropriate and permissible under these circumstances.

3) Other considerations

- a) There will be a delay of approximately 30 days for the chaplain's family members to be incorporated into the military medical system. For this reason, it is important that family members have copies of both (a) the military member's orders activating him or her to active duty, and (b) a reserve identification card. These items could help a family member to receive medical care during the 30-day period.
- b) Medical services for military members and their families are administered under the Tricare System. Further information on this system is available at www.tricare.mil.
- c) While on leave of absence, the pastor's housing allowance should continue until the military housing allowance is activated. If a pastor's family is living in a parsonage, arrangements should be made for their continuing in that setting during the leave of absence, or until a new pastor is called. When the military housing allowance is received, that amount should either be offered to the congregation in lieu of rent for the parsonage or used to pay utility costs.

4. Termination of call

- 7.43. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be either coterminous with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Sacrament, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.**
- 7.43.01.** When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.
- 7.43.02.** Ministers of Word and Sacrament previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.
- 7.46. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:**
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:**
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;**
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;**
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;**
 - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;**
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;**
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;**
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;**
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or**
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.**
 - b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,**
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or**
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.**
 - c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.**

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

a. Termination of congregational call: A letter of call from a congregation to a minister of Word and Sacrament may be terminated only as provided for in constitutional provisions 7.46., †S14.18., and *C9.05. If a minister of Word and Sacrament resigns from a call, the resignation may not be withdrawn by the pastor nor be rejected by the congregation. No acceptance of the resignation is necessary. The call ends no later than 30 days after the date the resignation was submitted, unless the congregation agrees to a later date.

b. Termination of Synod Council or Church Council call: A letter of call from the Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Sacrament may be terminated by: 1) the conclusion of the service or employment for which the call was granted; 2) resignation; 3) resignation or removal of the minister from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church; or 4) by decision of the calling authority to vacate the call. If a minister of Word and Sacrament resigns from a call, the resignation may not be withdrawn by the pastor nor rejected by the calling authority. No acceptance of the resignation is necessary. The call ends no later than 30 days after the date the resignation was submitted, unless the calling authority agrees to a later date.

5. Completion of responsibilities

The role of pastors in congregations to which they are not (or are no longer) called is governed by †S14.19. in the *Constitution for Synods*, which states, "Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council."

Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have completed their pastoral call to a particular congregation change their role in how they relate to that congregation, and care should be taken to provide for an orderly transition. Certain ministerial functions are specific to and performed on behalf of the congregation, not the individual, and are therefore the responsibility of the minister of Word and Sacrament serving under call (or one appointed by the synod bishop or contracted by the Congregation Council for such ministry). Although to be regarded as affirmations of the pastor's past service to the congregation, requests from members for the former pastor to preside at weddings, baptisms, funerals, and the like should be politely refused. Regardless of whether the pastor has accepted a call to another congregation or another expression of this church, the completion of pastoral responsibilities must be marked clearly and carefully.

The following guidelines are for pastors, the congregations they served, and synod bishops in understanding the new status of a pastor who has resigned a call. They are intended to affirm the past ministry of such pastors, to give directions which seek to avoid some pitfalls that can present themselves during transitions, and to point to constructive and healthful interactions in the future.

- a. Upon the effective date of the resignation, the minister of Word and Sacrament is no longer a pastor of the congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in that congregation.
- b. Care must be taken by the pastor to assure that the record of pastoral acts conducted within the congregation is up to date. As required by *C9.14. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* and †S14.21. in the *Constitution for Synods*, the secretary of the congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop that the record was received, in good order, before the departing pastor can be installed in a new charge or be granted retired status. Attention

also must be given to “make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations” to the congregation before departure (*C.9.08. and †S14.22.).

- c. Prior to, but as near to, the effective date of the resignation as is practicable, the minister of Word and Sacrament may make use of the rite of “Farewell and Godspeed” during which the pastor may return to representatives of the congregation the signs of the ministerial office that were given at the pastor’s installation.
- d. If invited to exercise a ministerial role by a member of a congregation to which they were formerly called, ministers of Word and Sacrament should indicate that they are not (or are no longer) authorized to take such a role. If invited to exercise such a role by the current pastor, care must be taken to assure that the parameters and limited scope of the activity are clear.
- e. As part of the bishop’s pastoral care, especially during times of transition, a synod bishop or a member of the bishop’s staff is encouraged to discuss these guidelines and their implications either in person or in correspondence.

B. On Leave from Call

7.31.07. On Leave from Call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the minister of Word and Sacrament is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, a minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Sacrament or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

1. Definition and criteria for on-leave-from-call status

- a. At the termination of the call of a rostered minister, if the rostered minister has not received and accepted a subsequent call, the following procedure is to be followed:
 - 1) The rostered minister must inform the bishop of the date his/her current call is coming to an end. The bishop shall, in a timely manner, make sure that the rostered minister is aware of the necessity to comply with these guidelines.
 - 2) A rostered minister seeking on-leave-from-call status shall make a written request to the synod bishop within 45 days following the termination of a prior call, providing a rationale as to why on-leave-from-call status should be granted. Failure to do so may result in removal from the roster.
 - 3) The request for on-leave-from-call status must include:
 - a) a statement of the rostered minister's commitment to be available for a letter of call;
 - b) a statement of how the rostered minister's gifts and abilities can contribute to the ministry and mission of this church;
 - c) the anticipated date when the rostered minister will be available for a letter of call;
 - d) a statement describing the ability and willingness of the rostered minister to provide ministry services while on leave from call at the direction of the synod bishop;
 - e) the rostered minister's plan for continuing education while on leave from call; and
 - f) a statement describing the rostered minister's current and intended participation in a congregation of this church.
 - 4) If a rostered minister requesting on-leave-from-call status desires to make a personal statement relative to the request, the Synod Council may, at its discretion and in the manner of its determination, allow for a personal appearance by the rostered minister to the Synod Council (or its designated committee).
 - 5) On-leave-from-call status is not automatically granted. Action granting or denying leave from call is to be taken by the Synod Council [ELCA constitutional provision 20.17., bylaw 7.31.07., and †S8.12.i.9. in the *Constitution for Synods*] upon endorsement by the synod bishop. A committee may be designated by the bishop to evaluate applications and bring recommendations to the Synod Council through the synod bishop for action.
 - 6) The effective date for on-leave-from-call status, if granted by the Synod Council, begins the day the rostered minister is no longer serving under a regularly issued letter of call. This date is not affected by severance payments.

- 7) Synod Council action related to a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status is reported as information to the annual Synod Assembly in the report of the bishop or the Synod Council.
 - 8) Written notification is sent to the rostered minister requesting on-leave-from-call status reporting the action of the Synod Council.
 - 9) The action of the Synod Council in granting on-leave-from-call status must be reported to the secretary of this church and Portico Benefit Services. Similar notification is given by the synod to the secretary of this church and Portico Benefit Services when such status is ended.
 - 10) Prior to the annual anniversary of the effective date of the rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status, the rostered minister must request renewal of the on-leave-from-call status. Annual action by the Synod Council is necessary for the continuation of that status.
 - 11) While on leave from call, a rostered minister must be an active member of a congregation of this church.
 - 12) A rostered minister on leave from call remains accountable to the synod bishop and must be willing to meet the criteria and standards of this church for its rostered ministers.
- b. Study Leave: A rostered minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the rostered ministry of this church, may be retained on the roster of this church for a maximum of six years by annual action of the Synod Council, in consultation with the appropriate unit. (*See bylaw 7.31.07.*)
A person already granted on-leave-from-call status, whose life circumstances change, may apply for a change to study leave. The Synod Council may approve such a change; however, the original date the leave began remains the same, thus allowing a maximum leave of six years.
- c. Family Leave: On leave from call for family responsibilities is available to rostered ministers with demonstrated circumstances that fulfill the criteria for this status. A rostered minister may request on-leave-from-call status for family responsibilities for a maximum of six years, by annual action of the Synod Council, based upon either of the following reasons (*See bylaw 7.31.07.*):
- 1) For the birth or care of a child or children of the rostered minister.
 - 2) For the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health problem. A serious health problem is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either a period of incapacity or treatment with inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility, or a period of incapacity or subsequent treatment following inpatient care. A medical certification of such a serious health problem must be submitted to the Synod Council as part of the request for on-leave-from-call status.
- A person already granted on-leave-from-call status, whose life circumstances change, may apply for a change to family leave. The Synod Council may approve such a change; however, the original date the leave began remains the same, thus allowing a maximum leave of six years.
- d. With approval of the Synod Council, either by general policy or by specific authorization, the synod bishop may place limitations or restrictions upon the availability for service of a rostered minister who is on leave from call. At least three months prior to the end of a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status, the bishop or bishop's designee will contact the rostered minister to review:
- 1) Pension and health insurance implications, with a recommendation that Portico Benefit Services be contacted.
 - 2) The criteria for continuation of on-leave-from-call status beyond three years, if applicable.
 - 3) The implications and expectations of being removed from the roster.
 - 4) The process for reinstatement to the roster.
- f. The transfer of the roster status of a rostered minister who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- g. The secretary of this church shall report semi-annually to the Conference of Bishops any person whose on-leave-from-call status is coming to an end within the next six months.

2. Criteria for extension of on-leave-from-call status

- a. A rostered minister may remain on leave from call beyond three years when such an extension contributes to the ministry and mission of this church and when the particular circumstances of the on-leave-from-call status warrant an exception to the normal three-year limitation. Such continuation on the roster of this church beyond the third year is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of both the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops.
- b. A rostered minister who is eligible for retired status should not be considered for an extension of on-leave-from-call status.
- c. A rostered minister who seeks to remain on leave from call beyond three years must provide a written request to the synod bishop and Synod Council for an extension of that status. This request should be received no later than six months prior to the end of the third year of on-leave-from-call status.

- d. This request must state clearly the reason(s) for such a request and how these reasons relate to this church's ministry and mission.
- e. The request must include the following information:
 - 1) The rationale for the rostered minister to remain on leave from call, including a statement of the rostered minister's commitment to be available for a letter of call, and an articulation of how the rostered minister's gifts and circumstances can contribute to the ministry and mission of this church;
 - 2) The anticipated date when the rostered minister will be available for a call;
 - 3) A statement describing the ability and willingness of the rostered minister to provide ministry services at the direction of the synod bishop, consistent with the ministry and mission needs of the synod;
 - 4) The rostered minister's plan for continuing education while on leave from call;
 - 5) A statement describing the rostered minister's current participation in a congregation of this church.
- f. Study Leave: A rostered minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the rostered ministry of this church, may remain on study leave beyond six years when such continuation contributes to the ministry and mission of this church and when the particular circumstances of the study leave warrant an exception to the normal six-year limitation. A written request must be made to the synod bishop and Synod Council as outlined for the extension of on leave from call (e. above) but must also indicate clearly the educational goals of the rostered minister, the time line for completion of study, and a statement of commitment that the rostered minister intends to be available for a letter of call within this church upon completion of study. Such continuation on the roster of this church is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops, and may be terminated by subsequent action of the Synod Council upon request of the synod bishop after notice to the rostered minister.
- g. Family Leave: A rostered minister on leave for care-giving responsibilities may remain on family leave beyond six years when the particular circumstances of the family leave warrant an exception to the normal six-year limitation. A written request must be made to the synod bishop and Synod Council as outlined for the extension of leave from call (e. above) but must also indicate clearly the continuing care-giving needs of the rostered minister, the possible time line for conclusion, and a statement of commitment that the rostered minister intends to be available for a letter of call within this church upon completion of these circumstances. Such continuation on the roster of this church is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops, and may be terminated by subsequent action of the Synod Council upon request of the synod bishop after notice to the rostered minister.
- h. Action by the synod bishop and Synod Council
 - 1) The synod bishop reviews the request for continuation of the on-leave-from-call status beyond three years (six years in the case of graduate study and family leave) and forwards that request to the Synod Council together with the bishop's evaluation of the request.
 - 2) At the request of the synod bishop, the Synod Council considers the request of the rostered minister and how it relates to the mission and ministry of the synod. Should the decision of the Synod Council be to recommend approval, the Synod Council shall make such a request to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 3) On behalf of the Synod Council, the synod bishop forwards the request and rationale to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 4) A rostered minister on leave from call must provide an annual written request to the synod bishop for recommendation to the Synod Council for continuation of that status.
 - 5) The Synod Council must review and act annually on requests for continuance of on-leave-from-call status beyond the three-year norm (six years for graduate study and family leave).
- i. Action by the Conference of Bishops
 - 1) The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops reviews such requests and reports its recommendations to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 2) The Conference of Bishops, at a regular meeting of the conference, by a majority vote acts upon requests for continuation of on-leave-from-call status. It shall report its decision to the synod seeking such a continuation.
 - 3) The action of the Conference of Bishops in approving the request of a Synod Council is valid for two years, if approved annually by the Synod Council.

C. Disability

- 7.41.08. Disability.** Ministers of Word and Sacrament may be granted disability status and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster.
- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted disability status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 7.42. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:**
- ...
- h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted disability status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church. ...**

1. Introduction

Disability roster status is an ecclesial determination granted by the Synod Council upon endorsement by the synod bishop in keeping with their constitutional authority. Such determinations are independent of the denial or granting of disability status by any health plan or benefits provider.

2. Disability roster status

- a. Disability roster status is discretionary, and there is no right or entitlement to such roster status even when disability benefits have been granted by a health plan or benefits provider.
- b. A minister of Word and Sacrament who seeks disability roster status shall submit a written request to the synod bishop for such status. The request from the minister should include the medical diagnosis, benefits decision, if any, of Portico Benefit Services or other benefits provider, and other pertinent information regarding the minister's disability. The synod bishop has sole discretion to determine whether to recommend to the Synod Council that such status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the council, in executive session if deemed necessary. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its sole discretion, whether to grant disability roster status.
- c. Disability roster status may be granted even though the minister has not submitted a request to the bishop or disability benefits have been denied by a health plan or benefits provider (*e.g.*, 7.46.c., †S14.18.c., *C9.05.c.).
- d. The synod bishop shall act to provide for appropriate pastoral care of the congregation or for those previously served by the minister.
- e. The continuation of disability roster status granted to a minister of Word and Sacrament is subject to review at any time and shall be reviewed in the event that disability benefits are terminated. Disability roster status granted to a minister of Word and Sacrament may be terminated by the Synod Council upon recommendation by the synod bishop or in the event the minister accepts a call.
- f. The transfer of the roster status of a minister with disability roster status may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- g. If the disability roster status ceases, a minister who is not under call or has not received and accepted a call, should request on-leave-from-call status or retired status, if eligible, in accordance with the established processes.

D. Retirement

7.41.07. Retirement. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may retire upon attaining the earlier of age 60 or 30 years on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.42. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:

...

- i. **on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.**

1. Policy and procedures related to retired status

- a. A minister of Word and Sacrament who has attained the age of 60 or who has been on the roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies for 30 or more years may be granted retired status by this church. Retired status is an ecclesial determination which may be granted by the Synod Council upon endorsement by the synod bishop in keeping with their constitutional authority. Such determinations are independent of the denial or granting of benefits under any health or retirement plan in which the minister of Word and Sacrament may be a member.
- b. A minister of Word and Sacrament who seeks retired roster status shall make a written request to the synod bishop no later than 45 days following the termination of the most recent call or of on-leave-from-call or disability status.
- c. The synod bishop shall determine whether the minister of Word and Sacrament is eligible for retired status and whether, in the bishop's sole discretion, to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the Synod Council, in executive session if deemed necessary. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status.
- d. The synod bishop shall act to provide for appropriate pastoral care of the congregation or for those previously served by the retiring minister.
- e. A minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted retired status shall retain that roster status until (1) the minister is no longer on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, (2) the minister accepts a call, or (3) the Synod Council revokes retired status upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Such revocation of a minister's retired status may occur only upon a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council, present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting.
- f. The Synod Council shall engage in a regular, periodic examination of all ministers of Word and Sacrament on the retired roster such that each and every retired minister's status is reviewed at least once during a three-year cycle.

2. Guidelines for retired ministers of Word and Sacrament

a. Roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament

A retired minister is on the roster of the synod in which last under call or in which the minister resides. The retired minister remains accountable to the synod bishop where rostered, and the minister should regularly report to the synod bishop on any activities as a minister of Word and Sacrament.

Unless bylaw 7.41.07.b. applies, a retired minister must be a member of an ELCA congregation in order to remain on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and remains subject to the standards for ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church.

b. Congregational membership

A retired pastor should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. Transferring one's membership to another congregation allows the successor pastor to assume pastoral leadership more readily. It also provides an opportunity for the retired pastor to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about the pastor's retired role.

c. Pastoral service

At the time of retirement, a minister of Word and Sacrament is no longer pastor of a congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in any congregation previously served unless specifically authorized to do so. Ministers of Word and Sacrament must respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve as well as the authority of the current pastors of such congregations.

The service of retired pastors is governed by the *Constitution for Synods* [†S14.19.], which describes the role of pastors in congregations in which they do not serve: "Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council" (†S14.19. in the *Constitution for Synods*).

The title of Pastor Emeritus has no official standing and carries with it no compensation or authorization for service or for other responsibilities.

d. Interim ministry

One area of potential service for the retired minister is interim ministry. Many retired pastors provide valuable and needed ministry to congregations in time of transition following the resignation of a pastor. The ELCA invites retired pastors to consider this important arena of ministry.

A retired pastor may serve under contract as an interim pastor during a time of pastoral vacancy only upon appointment by and authorization of the synod bishop. Retired pastors who serve under call in an interim ministry return to the active roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

e. Compensation

Retirement benefits provided through Portico Benefit Services, combined with Social Security benefits, are intended to provide adequate compensation to ministers in retirement. Neither retired pastors nor their spouses are entitled to any compensation from any congregation or ministry previously served solely by reason of being retired or having previously served in that congregation or ministry.

f. Consultation with synod bishop

As part of the bishop's pastoral care of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament, a synod bishop or a member of the bishop's staff is encouraged to meet with a minister at the time of retirement to discuss these guidelines, the minister's new retired status, and its implications.

g. Transfer from one synod to another

The transfer of the roster status of a rostered minister who is retired may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

IV. Removal from the roster

A. Reasons for removal

1. Death

Death of a minister of Word and Sacrament removes the minister from the roster.

2. Resignation

A minister of Word and Sacrament may voluntarily resign from the roster by giving written notice to the synod bishop. A resignation may not be withdrawn or rejected. No acceptance is necessary. The synod bishop responds to the notification with a letter describing the implications of resignation.

3. Lack of call or other roster status

If the call of a minister of Word and Sacrament comes to an end and the minister does not have another call and either does not apply for, or is not granted, on-leave-from-call status, retired status, or disability status, then the minister is no longer on the roster. Likewise, if a minister's on-leave-from-call status, retired status, or disability status comes to an end or is terminated, and the minister does not have another call and either does not apply for, or is not granted another roster status, then the minister is no longer on the roster.

4. Discipline

A minister of Word and Sacrament may be removed from the roster pursuant to the disciplinary provisions in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

5. Lack of congregational membership

A minister of Word and Sacrament who ceases to be a member of a congregation of this church, except as provided in 7.41.07.b. and 7.41.08.b., shall be removed from the roster.

6. Dual rostering

7.31.05. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.22. and bylaw 7.31.01., ministers on the Word and Sacrament roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church's Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church's standards and policies for ministers of Word and Sacrament.

In accordance with bylaw 7.31.05., a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church who enters the ordained ministry of another church body, or who serves a group schismatic from this church or from a congregation thereof, shall cease to be a member of this church. The minister's name shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament by the synod bishop.

B. Reporting

The synod bishop shall promptly report all removals from the roster to the secretary of this church and to the next synod assembly. The synod's roster files of those removed from the roster shall be transmitted to the secretary of this church in a timely manner, except in the case of death when the file should be transmitted to the synod or regional archives.

C. Guidelines for individuals formerly rostered as ministers of Word and Sacrament

1. The ministry of the baptized

This church affirms the integrity and importance of the ministry of the baptized. Removal of a person's name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church reflects a change of calling and function within the ministry of the baptized.

2. The ministry of Word and Sacrament

Some individuals are called by God in the church to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament. For a variety of reasons, there may be a time in the life of these individuals when they are no longer called by this church to serve in this ministry.

- a. When a person's name is removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of that person to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA cease.

- b. Individuals removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament may apply for reinstatement and may be reinstated.
- c. Individuals who are not under call by this church, are not on its roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and are not under the discipline of the ELCA may not function as pastors in the name of this church.
- d. For the sake of the gospel, there may be occasional exceptions to this rule. For instance, formerly rostered individuals may be authorized for a stated place and period of time by the synod bishop to preside at the sacraments and provide other pastoral ministry when, in the bishop's judgment, this will best serve the gospel in this church.

3. The participation of formerly rostered ministers

Removal from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament ends the rights and privileges this church confers at ordination. Formerly rostered individuals may continue as members of this church. Several specific changes follow:

- a. Use of the stole, sacramental vestments, and other clothing or symbols associated with the public ministry of Word and Sacrament is prohibited.
- b. Use of titles such as "Pastor" or "the Reverend" must be discontinued by the individual.
- c. Formerly rostered individuals may not preside at the sacraments and rites of this church unless specifically authorized by the synod bishop for the sake of the gospel. The gifts, training, and experience of a formerly rostered individual can be valuable to a congregation. The use of these gifts in the congregation should be discussed with the synod bishop at the time the rostered minister is removed and with that person's congregational pastor in consultation with the bishop. When preaching, a formerly rostered individual functions as a lay preacher and not as a supply pastor.
- d. The synod bishop is responsible to oversee and administer the work of the synod, including providing pastoral care and leadership to congregations and rostered ministers. It is, therefore, important that formerly rostered individuals consult with the synod bishop and observe synod guidelines regarding their service in this church.

See the model letters provided in the appendices.

V. Reinstatement to the roster

7.31.06. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Sacrament, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament in this church.

[Following is from the Candidacy Manual.]

A. Reinstatement Process

1. Reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is the responsibility of the candidacy committee of the synod where the applicant was last rostered.
2. If an applicant is seeking both reinstatement to a roster and a transfer to another synod, in accordance with *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the secretary of the ELCA and the synods involved must consent to the transfer. A transfer of candidacy that includes reinstatement requires the concurrence of both candidacy committees and both bishops.
3. In the case of an applicant whose previous rostered ministry was in one of the ELCA predecessor churches, the successor ELCA synod has the responsibility. In every case, the process begins in the synod from which the applicant left the roster or its successor.
4. In the case of an applicant whose removal from the roster was the result of one of the following:
 - a. the official disciplinary process of this church,
 - b. resignation or removal from the roster in lieu of the disciplinary process, or
 - c. application of ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06, where the person was on leave from call after conduct or allegations that could lead to disciplinary charges,then a minimum of five consecutive years without call must elapse before an application for reinstatement may be considered. The passage of five years without call does not guarantee reconsideration.

B. Application for Reinstatement

1. The applicant provides to the appropriate synod the completed Application for Reinstatement to the Roster of the ELCA, and the synod sends a copy to the Christian Community and Leadership home area for information. A Candidacy Application and a Rostered Minister Profile must be submitted online.
2. Upon receipt of the Application for Reinstatement, the synod bishop will notify the Office of the Secretary and request any pertinent information the churchwide office may have concerning the applicant.
3. With the approval of the ELCA secretary, the reinstatement process may be transferred from the synod of previous roster to the synod of current residence upon the written concurrence of both candidacy committee chairs (in consultation with members of the candidacy committee) and both synod bishops. The original synod will provide the receiving synod with all information and documentation concerning the applicant.
4. The bishop of the synod in which the reinstatement application will be considered schedules an interview with the applicant. The purpose of this interview is to determine the applicant's eligibility to be a candidate in the synod. The bishop also determines whether the application is timely.
5. In the case of an applicant where inappropriate conduct or allegations of misconduct led to resignation or removal from the roster, the synod bishop examines the applicant for indications of repentance and amendment of life as well as indication of or attempts at reconciliation with those injured by the conduct. Before proceeding with reinstatement, the bishop also documents corrective actions that have occurred. The bishop should invite comments from those directly affected by the applicant's inappropriate conduct or alleged misconduct.
6. The candidacy committee considers an applicant for reinstatement when the synod bishop forwards the application to the committee. The bishop may, in their sole discretion, decline to forward the application to the candidacy committee or may forward the application with a written statement of the bishop's opinion of the application.

C. Candidacy Committee

1. The candidacy committee will receive and review the Congregational Registration form from the congregation where the applicant is a member.
2. The committee shall determine that it has received all records and information concerning the applicant, including verification of synod records concerning the reason for removal from the roster. If synod records are incomplete, this verification may include conferring with the former bishop, with synod staff, or with the churchwide office.
3. The committee may request additional information from any source that it deems necessary to determine the applicant's readiness for ministry and suitability for reinstatement.
4. The applicant must prepare an Approval essay and submit it to the candidacy committee.
5. The committee may request a new psychological evaluation and background check when necessary. In the case of any applicant who has been off the roster or without call for more than five years, the candidacy committee will require the applicant to participate in a psychological evaluation. The expense of this evaluation is the responsibility of the applicant.
6. The candidacy committee follows the standards and procedures in the Candidacy Manual as its guide in considering a request for reinstatement. The candidacy committee interviews the applicant to explore all concerns related to reinstatement, including but not limited to:
 - a. the circumstances surrounding the removal of the applicant from the roster, including the applicant's reason(s) for leaving the roster;
 - b. the applicant's reason(s) for requesting reinstatement, with a special focus upon what has changed in the person's life, faith, attitudes, and circumstances since the time of removal;
 - c. discussion of the applicant's understanding of the specific roster in the ELCA and the applicant's willingness to serve in response to the needs of this church; and
 - d. discussion of the applicant's commitment to live according to the standards of this church, including *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.
7. The candidacy committee may request the Christian Community and Leadership home area to convene a Theological Review Panel to determine the applicant's theological readiness for Word and Sacrament ministry. The Theological Review Panel will make a recommendation to the committee following the procedures developed by the Christian Community and Leadership home area.

D. Decision

1. The candidacy committee will decide the applicant's suitability to serve as a rostered minister of this church. This decision is one of the following:
 - a. grant approval for reinstatement upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call,
 - b. postpone approval with specific recommendations for remedial or developmental work before further consideration for reinstatement, or
 - c. deny approval for reinstatement.
2. If the decision of the candidacy committee is to deny an applicant reinstatement, that decision is final. Any such applicant who desires reconsideration must begin the process again by applying.
3. In the case of an applicant who was removed from the roster under any of the circumstances listed in V.A.4.a–c. above, if the applicant is approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee, such approval is not effective unless affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the total membership of the executive committee of the Synod Council. After the candidacy committee reports its approval and the reasons for it to the executive committee of the Synod Council, the executive committee may obtain whatever additional information or advice, including legal advice, it deems necessary before affirming the decision of the candidacy committee.

E. Approval

If approved, the candidate will complete the normal First Call paperwork and will participate in the First Call process.

If the director for candidacy in the Christian Community and Leadership home area determines that the process for reinstatement described herein has not been fully or properly completed, then the Christian Community and Leadership home area, following consultation with the synod bishop and the home area executive director, shall postpone the candidate's participation in the First Call process until all requirements are met.

1. An approved candidate is eligible for a call for a period of one year after Approval by the synod. Any delay occasioned by a postponement is not counted toward that one-year period of eligibility.
2. The process for renewal of Approval is the same as that for other candidates for rostered ministry.

3. Upon receipt and acceptance of a properly issued and duly attested letter of call, the candidate is reinstated to the appropriate roster.

See the form for “Application for Reinstatement” in the Candidacy Manual.

VI. Cooperation with other church bodies in the exercise of Word and Sacrament ministry

A. With church bodies in the United States

1. Full communion partners

In 1991, the ELCA defined characteristics of a relationship of full communion which are “theological and missiological implications of the gospel that allow variety and flexibility” and “stress that the church act ecumenically for the sake of the world, not for itself alone.” Among these characteristics is “a mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject to the disciplinary regulations of other churches” (“Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA”).

Since then, the ELCA has entered into four agreements establishing full communion relations: “A Formula of Agreement” (1997) with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; “Called to Common Mission” (1999) with The Episcopal Church; “Following our Shepherd to Full Communion” (1999) with the Moravian Church in America Northern and Southern Provinces; and “Confessing our Faith Together” (2009) with the United Methodist Church. While the designations for “ordained ministers” have varied slightly among the partner churches, the agreements provide for the recognition and exchangeability of what the ELCA now calls “ministers of Word and Sacrament.”

- 8.63.01.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church or a minister of Word and Service, serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster—upon endorsement by the synod bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister is listed on the roster—under policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- a. A letter of call may be issued to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (7.44.A19.b.).
- ...
- c. A letter of call issued by the Church Council or a Synod Council for service in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly shall be governed by provision 7.43. and bylaw 7.43.01.
- 8.63.02.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synod bishop to serve in a congregation or employing entity of this church. Such service shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister of Word and Sacrament in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by the congregation or employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 8.63.03.** Whenever a rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve or is serving in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly, or whenever a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been so declared and established is to serve or is serving in this church, a full sharing of relevant information concerning such rostered minister’s experience and fitness for ministry is expected between the synod bishop (or other appropriate office or entity) of this church and the appropriate person, office, or entity in the other church. Relevant information related to fitness for ministry shall include, but is not limited to, any information concerning disciplinary proceedings or allegations that could result, or could have resulted, in disciplinary proceedings.
- 8.63.04.** A minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister’s service in a congregation of this church, in accord with bylaw 8.63.02.
- 8.63.05.** The availability of a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America shall be understood normally in three categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation; availability to meet an extended need, including service in “yoked parish” settings; and availability for a transfer of roster status.

- a. *Occasional service:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.
- b. *Extended service:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited to serve as the pastor of a congregation of this church for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Sacrament of the minister’s present church body. Such a person would be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of this church in a given situation.
- c. *Transfer:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a minister would then become a minister on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in a congregation or other setting in this church.

8.63.06. Rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while serving in an ecumenical setting, remain subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists is understood by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving in a congregation or other ministry of this church, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers of Word and Sacrament.

8.63.07. When a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America completes a contract for extended service, the synod file on that minister shall be sent to and retained by the Office of the Secretary.

7.31.05. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.22. and bylaw 7.31.01., ministers on the Word and Sacrament roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church’s Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church’s standards and policies for ministers of Word and Sacrament.

9.21.02. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of the congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church officially has established a relationship of full communion by action of a Churchwide Assembly may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of a congregation of this church.

Background: In accordance with the governing documents of the ELCA, policy related to the orderly exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament between the participating church bodies is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such policy would apply to ministers of Word and Sacrament in this church who, while being retained on the roster of the ELCA, would serve temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established, and to ministers of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established who would serve temporarily in a congregation or other ministry setting of this church without being admitted to the roster of the ELCA.

See “Admission to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of Persons Ordained in Another Christian Tradition” for the process by which a minister of Word and Sacrament in a full communion partner church body, intending to serve indefinitely in the ELCA, may apply for admission to the ELCA roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Such a person would then become an ELCA pastor upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in an ELCA congregation or other approved setting.

Roster status in more than one church body at a time is precluded in the ELCA.

Manuals for the “Orderly Exchange” of ministers of Word and Sacrament, with guidance for each full communion agreement, are available online: ELCA.org/Resources/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations.

a. Ministers of Word and Sacrament of another church body serving in the ELCA

NOTE: A minister of Word and Sacrament of a full communion partner church serves in an ELCA congregation UNDER CONTRACT, NOT UNDER CALL by the congregation.

- 1) Occasional service. A minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.
- 2) Extended service. A minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited by the synod bishop to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time, yet remain an ordained minister of that church body. Such a person will be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the “Confession of Faith” of the ELCA, and to live in a manner consistent with the expectations of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA or its ecumenical partners in a given situation.

Service in a congregation of this church or employing entity shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister of Word and Sacrament, for a stated period of time in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by the congregation. Extended service is reviewed annually by the Synod Council or Church Council.

Upon the recommendation of the synod bishop and approval by the Synod Council, the synod bishop authorizes an extended service ministry.

- a) Upon such authorization the minister of Word and Sacrament enters service in the ELCA through the entry rite, “Invitation to Extended Service,” which acknowledges the service of the minister of Word and Sacrament as pastor in a congregation or other setting of ministry in this church.

The Rite of Installation is **NOT** used as that rite is for use only for a regularly called minister of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA.

- b) A minister of Word and Sacrament who is approved to serve in an extended service ministry in the ELCA may be granted voice and vote in a synod assembly.

At any time for the sake of the ongoing ministry, the synod bishop may withdraw authorization for service (or the congregation, employing agency or the minister may terminate a contract for extended service) after consultation with the other parties to the contract.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have ceased to be “rostered” or the equivalent by a full communion partner church body are not considered eligible for such service unless or until they are received on the roster of the ELCA or of another full communion church.

b. ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in another church body

A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving for an extended period of time in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament upon the recommendation of the synod bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister is listed on the roster.

Congregations that cease to be rostered by a full communion partner church body are not eligible for service by a pastor of the ELCA until the congregation is received by the ELCA or another church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established.

c. Procedures

- 1) Assessment. Authorization for extended service is given by the Synod Council, on the basis of the synod bishop’s assessment of the suitability for service of the minister of Word and Sacrament. The bishop may wish to appoint a panel to assist in this determination. The appropriate churchwide unit recommends that this not be a responsibility of the full synod Candidacy Committee, although members of the committee may serve on the panel.
- 2) Pension and medical insurance. A determination of the medical and disability insurance for the minister of Word and Sacrament will be made. The guiding principle has become that a minister of Word and Sacrament serving under provisions of a full communion agreement remains in his or her parent church body’s pension and benefits plan, and the congregation or other ministry setting contributes to that plan.

It is anticipated that a congregation of this church will be able to contribute to the plan of another church body in order to provide appropriate medical coverage and a pension plan. Similarly, a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in another church body will need to determine that Portico Benefit Services (or another comparable plan) coverage is provided by the employing body.

- 3) Accountability and pastoral care. A minister of Word and Sacrament in another church body is accountable to the jurisdiction or judicatory in which that person is “rostered” or in other ways a member. Similarly, a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in another church body remains on the roster of this church and is accountable to the bishop of the synod in which rostered. The synod bishop is responsible for appropriate pastoral care and leadership for all ELCA congregations, including those served by ministers of Word and Sacrament of other church bodies (ELCA constitutional provision 10.31.a.3.).
- 4) Exchange of information. The assessments, authorizations, and reviews necessary to the “orderly exchange of ordained ministers” between church bodies with which a relationship of full communion exists require the complete and continuing disclosure to the synod of all information concerning the past and present ministry of these ministers serving in the ELCA, or of ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament serving under call from a synod council or the Church Council. Such disclosure must include any disciplinary proceedings, including discipline related to conduct during service in the ELCA by a minister of another church body.
- 5) Source of call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in a congregation, local, or regional ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the Synod Council in which that minister is rostered. An ELCA minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a national ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the ELCA Church Council. This call is subject to annual review by the Synod Council or Church Council.
- 6) Titles. The usual title “pastor of (insert name of congregation)” would be used for ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in an ELCA congregation. The recognized professional title of “The Rev.” for an ordained minister also would be applicable, in view of the officially recognized status of that minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which the ELCA has a relationship of full communion.

2. Other Lutheran bodies

8.64. This church, in accord with constitutional provision 2.05., acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that accept the teaching of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and understands that altar and pulpit fellowship with congregations and other entities of such churches may be locally practiced. Local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship, in accord with churchwide constitutional provision 2.05., is subject to the approval of the Synod Council, upon endorsement by the synod bishop. Notice of such approval is to be given to the presiding bishop as the chief ecumenical officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

8.64.01. The approval is granted initially for one year only and must be reviewed and approved annually by the Synod Council. Any time that the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship no longer serves the mission and ministry needs of this church, the synod bishop may withdraw endorsement and the Synod Council may withdraw the approval.

3. Other church bodies in local practice of pulpit and altar fellowship

8.64.02. A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body not in full communion with this church, while serving in a ministry involving the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship with a congregation of this church is understood to be subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving a congregation or other ministry of this church, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers of Word and Sacrament. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, while serving in a ministry involving the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship with a non-ELCA congregation, remains subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

B. With church bodies outside the United States

1. Churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

3.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

As a member of “The Lutheran World Federation, A Communion of Churches,” the ELCA is in “altar and pulpit fellowship” with all other LWF member churches. This communion relation provides that this church recognizes the ministry of Word and Sacrament in all members of the LWF.

Global partnerships and connections at synod, congregation, and churchwide levels of the ELCA have helped make visible the relationships of the worldwide Lutheran communion. Synods and others working with LWF member churches are encouraged to collaborate with the Service and Justice unit and other appropriate units of the churchwide organization.

When an ordained minister from a member church of the LWF wishes to be considered for missionary service in a congregation or synod of the ELCA, the following protocols are to be respected:

- a. Request for contact with companion church. At the point that the minister has an interview with an employing body in a synod of the ELCA, the synod bishop will contact the Service and Justice unit to formally request that the Service and Justice unit make official contact with the companion church. The request must come from the synod bishop and not from an individual congregation.
- b. Exchange of information. The assessments, authorizations, and reviews necessary for the exchange of ordained ministers between church bodies require the complete and continuing disclosure to the synod of all information concerning the past and present ministry of a minister who wishes to serve in the ELCA. Such disclosure must include any disciplinary proceedings and an assessment of the minister's suitability for service in the ELCA. The Service and Justice unit will request this disclosure from the companion church judicatory. The synod bishop will be given full access to the information contained in such disclosure.
- c. Visas and work authorization. All issues concerning visas, work permits, and taxes are the sole responsibility of the congregation or other employing body and the synod. The churchwide organization will not be involved in this process. The congregation and synod are to consult with competent legal counsel that specializes in immigration law and must abide by all laws and regulations concerning religious workers. All costs are to be borne by the congregation or other employing body and/or the synod.
- d. Suitability. The minister will be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the “Confession of Faith” of the ELCA, and to live in a manner consistent with the expectations of this church. In assessing suitability, preference may be given to ministers who have completed three years of initial service in a congregation of the sending church.
- e. Invitation to missionary service. Once the synod bishop has been assured of suitability and of the minister's legal right to serve, the bishop may issue to the minister a letter of invitation to missionary service.
- f. Contract. The minister is to serve under a contract with the employing body that specifies responsibilities, compensation, and the term of service. The term of service should be determined in consultation with legal counsel, as it depends on visa status. Compensation is to be commensurate with synod guidelines. Pension and health benefits are to be provided. Typically, such benefits should be provided through the system in which the minister already participates. Any questions concerning the possibility of Portico benefits are to be addressed directly to Portico.
- g. Memorandum of Understanding. Once an invitation to missionary service has been approved, the synod will, in consultation with the Service and Justice unit, draft a Memorandum of Understanding with the sending church that outlines the details of the missionary service, compensation, and accountabilities.
- h. Roster status. The minister is to remain on the roster or official list of ordained ministers of the sending companion church. An invitation to missionary service is not to serve as a means of transition to the rosters of the ELCA. Ministers are expected to return to their sending churches at the end of their term of service.
- i. Accountability. The minister will have multiple accountabilities: to the sending church, the synod bishop, and the congregation or other employing body.
- j. Entry rite. Upon authorization the minister enters missionary service through the entry rite, “Invitation to Extended Service,” which acknowledges the service of the minister as pastor in a congregation or in another

setting of ministry in this church. The Rite of Installation is NOT used, as that rite is for use only for a regularly called minister of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA.

- k. Synod assembly status. A minister who is approved for missionary service in the ELCA may be granted voice and vote in a synod assembly.
- l. Termination. At any time for the sake of the ongoing ministry, the synod bishop may withdraw authorization for service (or the congregation, employing body, or the minister may terminate a contract for missionary service) after consultation with the other parties to the contract and with the Service and Justice unit. At the end of the specified term, the invitation to missionary service will terminate. Any extensions are limited to those allowed by immigration status.

2. Particular agreements

a. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)

Among other Lutheran churches, the ELCIC has always had a uniquely close relationship with the ELCA that is grounded in proximity, common history, and continuing shared life. The “Statement of Inter-Lutheran Cooperation Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” provides in detail for mutual recognition of ministry, as well as other matters. (*See the appendix.*)

b. Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland [EKD])

The EKD is a federation of regional Lutheran, Reformed, and United Protestant churches. With the Lutheran churches, the ELCA is already in communion through its membership in the LWF. Through an agreement with the EKD it is further recognized that “pulpit and altar fellowship, which includes the mutual recognition of ordination, exists between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and all member churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany” (“Agreement between the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”). Guidelines have been agreed upon for cases in which EKD ministers of Word and Sacrament, or students preparing for such ministry, consider service in the ELCA. (*See the appendix.*)

Part Two:
Ministers of Word and Service
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

I. Constitutional description for Ministry of Word and Service and Standards for Ministers of Word and Service

- 7.50. MINISTRY OF WORD AND SERVICE**
- 7.51. This church calls and receives onto the roster qualified persons to provide a ministry of Word and Service, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation: nurturing, healing, leading, advocating dignity and justice, and equipping the whole people of God for their life of witness and service within and beyond the congregation for the sake of God’s mission in the world.**
- 7.52. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to serve, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Service shall comply with this church’s constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.**
- 7.53. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.**
- 7.54. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Service who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.52., 7.53., and 7.61., and related bylaws.**
- 7.54.01. Ministers of Word and Service shall be known as deacons.**
- 7.54.A16. *Those persons previously rostered as associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be retained as deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church). Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.***
- 7.55. Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution.**
- 7.60. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE**
- 7.61. In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures:**
- 7.61.01. Basic Standards.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Service of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church’s constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:
- a. commitment to Christ;
 - b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
 - d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
 - e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
 - f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
 - g. membership in a congregation of this church.
- 7.61.02. Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church’s outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God’s world;
 - c. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
 - d. equip the baptized for ministry in God’s world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God’s mission;
 - f. practice stewardship that respects God’s gift of time, talents, and resources;

- g. be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

II. Admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service

A. Preparation and Approval

7.61.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.61.04., a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
- c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

B. Bishop authorization of ordination

The bishop with the power to authorize an ordination is *the bishop of the synod in which a candidate has accepted a call*. That bishop authorizes the ordination, even if the candidate comes from another synod and may have been approved by the multi-synod or synod Candidacy Committee of another synod.

1. **Provision for ordination:** According to †S8.12.d. and f. in the *Constitution for Synods*, the bishop of a synod is to: “Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church;” and shall “install (or provide for the installation of)” such deacons.
2. **Jurisdiction:** In receiving and accepting a valid call, the candidate comes under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the synod in which the call was issued. That bishop, on the basis of the record of such a valid call, authorizes the ordination, even if the ordination is to take place on the territory of another synod.
3. **Planning of ordination:** If the ordination is to occur on the territory of another synod (*e.g.*, at a candidate’s home congregation), the bishop who authorizes the ordination *shall* consult with the bishop of the synod on whose territory the ordination may be held *prior to* approving any plans for such an ordination.
 - a. No candidate shall make plans for ordination prior to consultation with the synod bishop under whose authority the candidate is to be ordained.
 - b. If an ordination is planned on the territory of another synod, the *patterns and practices of the synod of jurisdiction shall prevail*. No ordination is to be scheduled without the prior approval of the bishop on whose territory the rite is to occur.
4. **Signing the certificate of ordination:** The bishop authorizing the ordination shall be the bishop who signs the certificate of ordination.

III. Status on the roster

A. Calls for ministers of Word and Service

1. Letters of Call and Service under Call

7.70. CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.71. **Letters of Call.** Letters of call to ministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.71.01. **Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Service of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synod council, a synod assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A19.
- b. A minister of Word and Service serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a minister of Word and Service shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

- a. Issuance of a letter of call: Ministers of Word and Service serve under call as stated in churchwide bylaw 7.71.01. An average of 15 hours of service per week is the minimum standard for a call to be issued.
- b. Attesting signature: The appropriate synod bishop shall attest the letter of call (provisions †S8.12.e. and †S14.41.c. in the *Constitution for Synods* and provision *C9.24. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*). The bishop's signature confirms only that the call process has been followed, that the letter of call was properly extended, and that the minister of Word and Service or candidate is eligible to accept the call.

2. Sources of Calls

7.74.A21. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

- 1) A “call” is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the “Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service,” through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a “letter of call.”
- 2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.
- 3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.
- 4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.
- 5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church’s care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Call for Ministers of Word and Service

	Setting	Calling Body
1.0	Congregational ministry	
1.1	Single congregation	Congregation meeting
1.2	Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal, with one of the participating congregations issuing the call
1.3	Coalition and cluster ministry	Synod Council
1.4	Congregations beyond this church	
1.41	Independent Lutheran congregations	Synod Council
1.42	Full communion congregation	Synod Council
1.43	Deacon in a synod-authorized ministry	Synod Council
1.44	Other	Synod Council
2.0	Synod ministry	
2.1	Assistant to the Bishop	Synod Council
2.2	Shared staff of two or more synods	Synod Council
2.3	Staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units	Synod Council
3.0	Regional ministry	
3.1	Staff	Church Council
3.2	Shared synod-churchwide staff	Church Council
4.0	Churchwide ministry	
4.1	Secretary	Churchwide Assembly
4.2	Treasurer	Church Council
4.3	Staff of the churchwide organization	Church Council
5.0	Institutional ministry	
5.1	Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod	Synod Council
5.2	Institution/agency related to more than one synod	Synod Council of one of the synods

5.3	<i>ELCA-related institution/agency</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
5.4	<i>Other</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
6.0	<i>Campus ministry</i>	
6.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
7.0	<i>Outdoor ministry</i>	
7.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.0	<i>Ecumenical/Inter-religious ministry</i>	
8.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
8.3	<i>National/international organization</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
9.0	<i>Inter-Lutheran ministry</i>	
9.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
9.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
9.3	<i>National/International</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
10.0	<i>Educational ministry</i>	
10.1	<i>ELCA-related seminary</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.2	<i>Seminary unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.3	<i>ELCA-related college</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.4	<i>College unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.5	<i>ELCA-related school</i>	<i>Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located</i>
10.6	<i>School unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which school is located</i>
10.7	<i>Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit</i>	<i>Synod Council in which the center's main office is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.0	<i>Missionary ministry</i>	
11.1	<i>Outside United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.2	<i>Within United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
12.0	<i>Independent Lutheran Organization</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of the appropriate churchwide unit</i>
13.0	<i>Separately Incorporated Ministry</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
14.0	<i>Other</i>	

	14.1 <i>Non-stipendiary service under call</i>	<i>Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops</i>
	14.2 <i>Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)</i>	<i>Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops</i>

a. Calls to non-congregational service

- 1) The decision on the source of call is determined in accord with ELCA continuing resolution 7.74.A21. As the calling source for calls to non-congregational service, the Synod Council or Church Council must decide if the proposed call is appropriate. The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops may be consulted.
- 2) The synod in which the institution, agency, or other employing entity is located should be the synod which issues the call to non-congregational service. In the case of ministries/agencies that are multi-synod, the bishops involved should collectively decide which synod should issue the call.
- 3) The bishop of the synod in which the minister being called is rostered should be consulted before a Church Council call to non-congregational service is issued.
- 4) Each rostered minister is required to report annually to the bishop of the synod in which the minister is rostered.
- 5) Responsibility for oversight of such non-congregational calls should be noted in the minutes of the appropriate Synod Council or Church Council.
- 6) Note churchwide constitutional provision 7.72. regarding rostering of individuals in non-congregational calls:

Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

...

- b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Service; [or]**
- c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council. ...**

- 7) A minister who receives a letter of call issued by the Church Council normally shall remain on the roster of the synod in which she or he served prior to receiving the call through the Church Council. Specific exceptions exist, as noted in provision 7.72.:

Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

...

- d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synod bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region. ...**

- 8) ELCA bylaw 7.72.01. indicates:

If the service of a minister of Word and Service who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.72.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

- 9) ELCA bylaw 7.72.02. provides:

In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of roster status of a minister of Word and Service serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

b. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call

7.71.02. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Service for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

1) Definition and criteria for Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call

- a) Non-stipendiary ministry in the ELCA is understood to be service as a rostered minister either without compensation, for reimbursed expenses only, or for a token stipend that is significantly below the typical salary received for similar ministry.
- b) Non-stipendiary calls are not eligible for participation in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program; therefore, such non-stipendiary service is possible only when there is clear evidence that the minister of Word and Service has adequate alternative income and health insurance.
- c) A letter of call to non-stipendiary ministry in the ELCA may be issued only by a Synod Council following approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- d) The minister of Word and Service serving in a non-stipendiary call shall be accountable to the synod bishop and Synod Council in carrying out this ministry.
- e) A call to non-stipendiary service shall be a one-year term call that may be renewed by the Synod Council only on the basis of the satisfactory fulfillment of the established criteria enumerated below.
- f) The criteria under which a Synod Council may issue a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service for non-stipendiary service include the following:
 - i. There shall be a clearly defined statement of the need for this minister to provide for Word and Service ministry in the synod and a rationale for this call to be for non-stipendiary service, including an annual ministry plan;
 - ii. The minimum commitment by the minister of Word and Service shall be a monthly average of 15 hours per week to the ministry to which called.

2) Action by the Synod Bishop and Synod Council

When the synod bishop and Synod Council believe that the criteria for a non-stipendiary letter of call are met by a specific ministry, the Synod Council may propose by a majority vote a letter of call.

- a) The Synod Council must determine that a call to non-stipendiary service is extended in order to carry out a specific ministry on behalf of the synod.
- b) The Synod Council forwards its request for a call, together with the rationale for issuing the call to non-stipendiary service, to the Conference of Bishops.
- c) The Conference of Bishops takes action to approve or deny the request.
- d) Should the Conference of Bishops approve the request and the Synod Council issue the call, the Synod Council will conduct an annual review of the non-stipendiary call.
- e) Annual Synod Council action is required in order to continue the call to non-stipendiary service.

3) Action by the Conference of Bishops

The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops receives all requests from synod councils for calls to non-stipendiary service.

- a) The Roster Committee reviews these requests and reports its recommendations to the Conference of Bishops.
- b) The Conference of Bishops, in a regular meeting of the conference, by a majority vote acts upon requests for calls to non-stipendiary service. It reports its decision to the synod seeking such approval.
- c) When approval is given by the Conference of Bishops, the Synod Council may proceed to issue a letter of call to non-stipendiary service and may annually renew such a call without subsequent action by the Conference of Bishops.

c. Shared-time ministries

7.71.01. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synod council, a synod assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A19. ...

1) Definition of shared-time ministry

The ELCA understands shared-time ministry to exist when a rostered minister is called to serve in one or more settings of this church while earning income from other employment or while devoting substantial time to other activities. Some examples of contexts and settings for which shared-time ministries may be appropriate are:

- *Small-membership congregations* with significant opportunities for mission and service.
- *New ministries* so limited in size or slow in development that they would require a disproportionate and unwise investment of time and money, if the more typical mission-development approach were employed.
- *Ministries* (e.g., *inner city, ethnic, and rural*) where the community's expectation is that the rostered minister will receive primary financial support from secular employment.
- *Multi-staff congregations* looking for ministry specialties, in addition to the services of rostered ministers and contracted laypersons.
- *Parishes that would benefit from having two or more individuals serving a single congregation or multiple congregations* but that cannot afford full-time salaries for several individuals.
- *Specialized ministry needs* of institutions and agencies that may call for a high degree of training and skill but that may neither warrant investment of appropriate full-time salary nor justify the engagement of a full-time staff person in that position.

2) Criteria for shared-time ministry

- a) Individuals eligible for shared-time ministry must be on the roster of this church or have been recently approved for initial call.
- b) Experienced individuals, whose ability to work in complex settings has already been tested, are preferred.
- c) A rostered minister may be under call to only ONE church entity. Other employment is by agreement, not under call.
- d) The work-load for the call must be no less than an average of 15 hours per week.
- e) Compensation shall be commensurate with synod compensation guidelines that apply to individuals in full-time positions.
- f) Any contemplated non-church employment for the rostered minister shall be subject to the review and approval of the synod bishop.

3) Procedures for call to shared-time ministry

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides principles and procedures for the calling of ministers of Word and Service (churchwide continuing resolution 7.74.A21.). In addition to the regular procedures, a letter of call for shared-time ministry shall include the following:

- a) The range of duties and responsibilities shall be specified by adding appendices to the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities," related to the letter of call (*C9.27.).
- b) The decision to seek a shared-time deacon shall be based upon a study of mission and ministry needs in the particular setting. Appropriate synod or churchwide leaders must participate in the study and decision.
- c) A periodic evaluation by the calling entity shall be encouraged by the appropriate synod bishop or churchwide leaders so that the called minister is held accountable for the ministry in that particular situation. The calling entity is accountable for adequate professional and financial support.
- d) Any exceptions to the guidelines governing time and compensation must be requested from the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

4) Appropriate candidates for shared-time ministry

Shared-time ministry demands the ability to use time efficiently, the flexibility to adjust to altering circumstances, and the willingness to make a positive contribution to church and society through secular employment or other interests. The effective shared-time minister has a clear sense of personal ministry and professional integrity. He or she has a concept of ministry that values extensive shared leadership with laity.

It is appropriate for ministers of Word and Service to offer themselves for shared-time ministry, as with all specific ministries, on the basis of their own sense of vocation and their sense of the needs of this church. It is not appropriate, however, for this dual-vocational interest to take priority over the mission needs of this church.

5) Support and accountability in shared-time ministry

The nature of shared-time ministry requires that the employing entity pay particular attention to such matters as compensation and benefits, setting of non-working times for meetings, and specifying shared expectations, which acknowledge the special dynamics of this style of ministry.

- a) Accountability of the shared-time minister is the same as with all rostered ministers.
- b) Evaluation of the ministry should be based upon the stated goals and conditions established for that ministry at the time of call.
- c) The entity of this church that calls the minister will review the ministry annually to evaluate the ongoing appropriateness of the shared-time style for that particular mission opportunity.

d. Ecclesiastical endorsement for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education (MCPCCE)

Background: *This resource is intended for use by synod bishops and synod staff in working with individuals considering service in a ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education. Following all other applicable call guidelines, a synod may issue a letter of call to a rostered minister to serve in such ministries even if that person does not have ecclesiastical endorsement or professional certification. However, synods are encouraged to seek endorsed and certified individuals for such ministries. Those individuals serving in these ministries who are not endorsed and certified should be encouraged and supported to seek MCPCCE ecclesiastical endorsement. This section describes both the values and limitations of such endorsement and certification as well as an overview of the process.*

Introduction

The ecclesiastical endorsement process in the ELCA for ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical education (MCPCCE) provides the basis for a recommendation to the synod bishop and Synod Council concerning a rostered minister’s suitability, readiness, aptitude, pastoral identity and competence and theological integration for a particular ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling or clinical pastoral education. The professional certification process follows ecclesiastical endorsement.

1) Definition of ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification

- a) Professional certification: The recognition by a professional chaplaincy, pastoral counseling or clinical pastoral education organization that a person has met a level of professional competence of ministry in a specific setting.
- b) Ecclesiastical endorsement: The recognition that a rostered minister has met ELCA endorsement standards for theological and pastoral competence to serve in ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical pastoral education.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is a necessary pre-requisite for certification by a professional organization. Ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification are both normally required by an employing agency/institution. ELCA rostered ministers who seek ecclesiastical endorsement are expected to seek and obtain professional certification.

The MCPCCE program is located in the Christian Community and Leadership unit.

Ecclesiastical endorsement for federal chaplaincies is required for a minister of Word and Service to apply for positions in the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Justice (Bureau of Prisons) and any other federal departments, agencies, bureaus, and services. Each federal department establishes minimum standards for applicants to apply, and all require a valid, current ecclesiastical endorsement specifically for chaplaincy service in that department. Applications for ecclesiastical endorsement for federal chaplaincy are obtained through the Christian Community and Leadership unit, senior director for federal chaplaincy.

The following are recognized professional organizations:

Association of Professional Chaplains (APC); American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC); American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT); American Psychological Association (APA); Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE); American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA); National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC); National Association of Certified Mental Health Counselors (NACMHC); Association of Certified Social Workers (ACSW).

2) MCPCCE endorsement process

The document “Endorsement Standards and Procedures, Call Criteria and Program Guidelines for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education” (ELCA.org/Resources/Specialized-Pastoral-Care):

- Establishes standards for theological and pastoral competence for ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education
- Sets forth criteria for calls and appointments to ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education
- Presents guidelines for pastoral ministry programs in all affiliated or recognized social ministry organizations

Based upon material submitted by the candidate and a meeting with a consultation committee, a recommendation is provided to the synod bishop regarding the readiness of the rostered minister for a specific ministry. The synod bishop and the Synod Council have sole authority to grant or revoke the ecclesiastical endorsement.

- 3) Values of ecclesiastical endorsement
 - a) Seeks to establish accountability between individuals serving in the area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education and their respective judicatories and to emphasize the importance of appropriate conduct and practice of those who serve in these ministries.
 - b) Seeks to emphasize the importance of ecclesiastical endorsement in a synod's consideration of a call to service in one of these ministries.
 - c) Enables synod councils to issue a term call that permits a non-endorsed candidate engaging in the ecclesiastical endorsement process to serve while completing the endorsement process.
 - d) Provides a standard set of expectations for rostered ministers who seek to serve in a specific area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.

- 4) Endorsement consultation outcomes
 - a) Renders an assessment of the readiness, pastoral competence, and theological integration of rostered ministers who seek to enter a specific field of ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.
 - b) Utilizes the professional gifts of rostered ministers who have long ministered in a specific area to assist in rendering a professional recommendation for ecclesiastical endorsement.
 - c) Renders a recommendation on the professional pastoral competence of candidates to employing agencies and institutions that seek to meet national professional accreditation standards.
 - d) Serves as a referral source and consultation to bishops and seeks to provide resources for rostered ministers exploring vocational and training options in the area of ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical pastoral education.

- 5) Limitations of ecclesiastical endorsement
 - a) Does not imply or guarantee that professional certification will be achieved or that a call to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education will be issued.
 - b) Does not establish an employment, agency, or supervisory relationship between the endorsing synod and the rostered minister receiving the endorsement.
 - c) Does not imply or assure that the endorsed individual has undergone any background or reference checks, screening, psychological testing, or evaluation as part of the ecclesiastical endorsement process.

- 6) Initiating the ELCA ecclesiastical endorsement process

When a rostered minister contacts the synod regarding the ecclesiastical endorsement process, or when a synod is considering issuing a call to a ministry within the synod of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education, questions related to ecclesiastical endorsement in the ELCA or for military, VA, or federal corrections applications may be directed to the senior director for federal chaplaincy in the Christian Community and Leadership unit.

Any individual seeking ecclesiastical endorsement for a federal chaplaincy will contact the senior director for federal chaplaincy in the Christian Community and Leadership unit. The application from the individual requires a letter from the synod bishop on whose roster the minister of Word and Service is listed.

3. Termination of a call

- 7.73. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Service of this church shall be either coterminous with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Service, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.**
- 7.73.01.** When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.
- 7.73.02.** Ministers of Word and Service previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.
- 7.75. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:**
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:**
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;**
 - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;**
 - 3) inability to conduct the office to which they have been called effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;**
 - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;**
 - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;**
 - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;**
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;**
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or**
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.**
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,**
- 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one non-rostered person, or**
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one non-rostered person.**
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.**

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.**
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.**
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.**

a. Termination of congregational call: A letter of call from a congregation to a minister of Word and Service may be terminated only as provided for in constitutional provisions 7.75., †S14.43. and *C9.25. If a minister of Word and Service resigns from a call, the resignation may not be withdrawn by the deacon nor rejected by the congregation. No acceptance of the resignation is necessary. The call ends no later than 30 days after the date the resignation was submitted, unless the congregation agrees to a later date.

b. Termination of Synod Council or Church Council call: A letter of call from the Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Service may be terminated by: 1) the conclusion of the service or employment for which the call was granted; 2) resignation; 3) resignation or removal of the minister from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church; or 4) by decision of the calling authority to vacate the call. If a minister of Word and Service resigns from a call, the resignation may not be withdrawn by the deacon nor rejected by the calling authority. No acceptance of the resignation is necessary. The call ends no later than 30 days after the date the resignation was submitted, unless the calling authority agrees to a later date.

4. Completion of responsibilities

The role of deacons in congregations to which they are not (or are no longer) called is governed by provision †S14.44. in the *Constitution for Synods*, which states, “Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.”

Ministers of Word and Service who have completed their call to a particular congregation change their role in how they relate to that congregation, and care should be taken to provide for an orderly transition. Certain ministerial functions are specific to, and performed on behalf of, the congregation not the individual, and are therefore the responsibility of the minister of Word and Service serving under call, or one appointed by the synod bishop or contracted by the Congregation Council for such ministry. Although to be regarded as affirmations of the deacon’s past service to the congregation, requests from members for the former deacon to preside at weddings, funerals, and the like should politely be refused. Regardless of whether the deacon has accepted a call to another congregation or another expression of this church, the completion of responsibilities must be marked clearly and carefully.

The following guidelines are for deacons, the congregations they served, and synod bishops in understanding the new status of a deacon who has resigned a call. They are intended to affirm the past ministry of such deacons, to give directions which seek to avoid some pitfalls that can present themselves during transitions, and to point to constructive and healthful interactions in the future.

- a. Upon the effective date of the resignation, the minister of Word and Service no longer is a deacon of the congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of that office in that congregation.
- b. Prior to, but as near to, the effective date of the resignation as is practicable, the minister of Word and Service may make use of the rite of “Farewell and Godspeed.”
- c. If invited to exercise a ministerial role by a member of a congregation to which they were formerly called, ministers of Word and Service should indicate that they are not (or are no longer) authorized to take such a role. If invited to exercise such a role by the current rostered ministers, care must be taken to assure that the parameters and limited scope of the activity are clear.
- d. As part of the bishop’s pastoral care, especially during times of transition, a synod bishop or a member of the bishop’s staff is encouraged to discuss these guidelines and their implications either in person or in correspondence.

B. On Leave from Call

7.61.08. On Leave from Call. A minister of Word and Service of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the minister of Word and Service is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a minister of Word and Service engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Service may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Service or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

1. Definition and criteria for on-leave-from-call status

- a. At the termination of the call of a rostered minister, if the rostered minister has not received and accepted a subsequent call, the following procedure is to be followed:
 - 1) The rostered minister must inform the bishop of the date the current call is coming to an end. The bishop shall, in a timely manner, make sure that the rostered minister is aware of the necessity to comply with these guidelines.
 - 2) A rostered minister seeking on-leave-from-call status shall make a written request to the synod bishop within 45 days following the termination of a prior call, providing a rationale as to why on-leave-from-call status should be granted. Failure to do so may result in removal from the roster.
 - 3) The request for on-leave-from-call status must include:
 - a) a statement of the rostered minister's commitment to be available for a letter of call;
 - b) a statement of how the rostered minister's gifts and abilities can contribute to the ministry and mission of this church;
 - c) the anticipated date when the rostered minister will be available for a letter of call;
 - d) a statement describing the ability and willingness of the rostered minister to provide ministry services while on leave from call at the direction of the synod bishop;
 - e) the rostered minister's plan for continuing education while on leave from call; and
 - f) a statement describing the rostered minister's current and intended participation in a congregation of this church.
 - 4) If a rostered minister requesting on-leave-from-call status desires to make a personal statement relative to the request, the Synod Council may, at its discretion and in the manner of its determination, allow for a personal appearance by the rostered minister before the Synod Council (or its designated committee).
 - 5) On-leave-from-call status is not automatically granted. Action granting or denying leave from call is to be taken by the Synod Council [ELCA constitutional provision 20.17., bylaw 7.61.08., and †S8.12.i.9. in the *Constitution for Synods*] upon endorsement by the synod bishop. A committee may be designated by the bishop to evaluate applications and bring recommendations to the Synod Council through the synod bishop for action.
 - 6) The effective date for on-leave-from-call status, if granted by the Synod Council, begins the day the rostered minister is no longer serving under a regularly issued letter of call. This date is not affected by severance payments.

- 7) Synod Council action related to a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status is reported as information to the annual Synod Assembly in the report of the bishop or the Synod Council.
 - 8) Written notification is sent to the rostered minister requesting on-leave-from-call status reporting the action of the Synod Council.
 - 9) The action of the Synod Council in granting on-leave-from-call status must be reported to the secretary of this church and Portico Benefit Services. Similar notification is given by the synod to the secretary of this church and Portico Benefit Services when such status is ended.
 - 10) Prior to the annual anniversary of the effective date of the rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status, the rostered minister must request renewal of the on-leave-from-call status. Annual action by the Synod Council is necessary for the continuation of that status.
 - 11) While on leave from call, a rostered minister must be an active member of a congregation of this church.
 - 12) A rostered minister on leave from call remains accountable to the synod bishop and must be willing to meet the criteria and standards of this church for its rostered ministers.
- b. Study Leave: A rostered minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the rostered ministry of this church, may be retained on the roster of this church for a maximum of six years by annual action of the Synod Council, in consultation with the appropriate unit. (*See bylaw 7.61.08.*)
A person already granted on-leave-from-call status, whose life circumstances change, may apply for a change to study leave. The Synod Council may approve such a change; however, the original date the leave began remains the same, thus allowing a maximum leave of six years.
- c. Family Leave: On leave from call for family responsibilities is available to rostered ministers with demonstrated circumstances that fulfill the criteria for this status. A rostered minister may request on-leave-from-call status for family responsibilities for a maximum of six years, by annual action of the Synod Council, based upon either of the following reasons. (*See bylaw 7.61.08.*)
- 1) For the birth or care of a child or children of the rostered minister.
 - 2) For the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health problem. A serious health problem is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either a period of incapacity or treatment with inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility, or a period of incapacity or subsequent treatment following inpatient care. A medical certification of such a serious health problem must be submitted to the Synod Council as part of the request for on-leave-from-call status.
A person already granted on-leave-from-call status, whose life circumstances change, may apply for a change to family leave. The Synod Council may approve such a change; however, the original date the leave began remains the same, thus allowing a maximum leave of six years.
- d. With approval of the Synod Council, either by general policy or by specific authorization, the synod bishop may place limitations or restrictions upon the availability for service of a rostered minister who is on leave from call.
- e. At least three months prior to the end of a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status, the bishop or bishop's designee will contact the rostered minister to review:
- 1) Pension and health insurance implications, with a recommendation that Portico Benefit Services be contacted.
 - 2) The criteria for continuation of on-leave-from-call status beyond three years, if applicable.
 - 3) The implications and expectations of being removed from the roster.
 - 4) The process for reinstatement to the roster.
- f. The transfer of the roster status of a rostered minister who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- g. The secretary of this church shall report semi-annually to the Conference of Bishops any person whose on-leave-from-call status is coming to an end within the next six months.

2. Criteria for extension of on-leave-from-call status

- a. A rostered minister may remain on leave from call beyond three years when such an extension contributes to the ministry and mission of this church and when the particular circumstances of the on-leave-from-call status warrant an exception to the normal three-year limitation. Such continuation on the roster of this church beyond the third year is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of both the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops.
- b. A rostered minister who is eligible for retired status should not be considered for an extension of on-leave-from-call status.
- c. A rostered minister who seeks to remain on leave from call beyond three years must provide a written request to the synod bishop and Synod Council for an extension of that status. This request should be received no later than six months prior to the end of the third year of on-leave-from-call status.

- d. This request must state clearly the reason(s) for such a request and how these reasons relate to this church's ministry and mission.
- e. The request must include the following information:
 - 1) The rationale for the rostered minister to remain on leave from call, including a statement of the rostered minister's commitment to be available for a letter of call, and an articulation of how the rostered minister's gifts and circumstances can contribute to the ministry and mission of this church;
 - 2) The anticipated date when the rostered minister will be available for a call;
 - 3) A statement describing the ability and willingness of the rostered minister to provide ministry services at the direction of the synod bishop, consistent with the ministry and mission needs of the synod;
 - 4) The rostered minister's plan for continuing education while on leave from call;
 - 5) A statement describing the rostered minister's current participation in a congregation of this church.
- f. Study Leave: A rostered minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the rostered ministry of this church, may remain on study leave beyond six years when such continuation contributes to the ministry and mission of this church and when the particular circumstances of the study leave warrant an exception to the normal six-year limitation. A written request must be made to the synod bishop and Synod Council as outlined for the extension of leave from call (e. above) but must also indicate clearly the educational goals of the rostered minister, the time line for completion of study, and a statement of commitment that the rostered minister intends to be available for a letter of call within this church upon completion of study. Such continuation on the roster of this church is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops, and may be terminated by subsequent action of the Synod Council upon request of the synod bishop after notice to the rostered minister.
- g. Family Leave: A rostered minister on leave for care-giving responsibilities may remain on family leave beyond six years when the particular circumstances of the family leave warrant an exception to the normal six-year limitation. A written request must be made to the synod bishop and Synod Council as outlined for the extension of leave from call (e. above) but must also indicate clearly the continuing care-giving needs of the rostered minister, the possible time line for conclusion, and a statement of commitment that the rostered minister intends to be available for a letter of call within this church upon completion of these circumstances. Such continuation on the roster of this church is contingent upon recommendation by the synod bishop and action of the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops, and may be terminated by subsequent action of the Synod Council upon request of the synod bishop after notice to the rostered minister.
- h. Action by the synod bishop and Synod Council
 - 1) The synod bishop reviews the request for continuation of the on-leave-from-call status beyond three years (six years in the case of graduate study and family leave) and forwards that request to the Synod Council together with the bishop's evaluation of the request.
 - 2) At the request of the synod bishop, the Synod Council considers the request of the rostered minister and how it relates to the mission and ministry of the synod. Should the decision of the Synod Council be to recommend approval, the Synod Council shall make such a request to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 3) On behalf of the Synod Council, the synod bishop forwards the request and rationale to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 4) A rostered minister on leave from call must provide an annual written request to the synod bishop for recommendation to the Synod Council for continuation of that status.
 - 5) The Synod Council must review and act annually on requests for continuance of on-leave-from-call status beyond the three-year norm (six years for graduate study and family leave).
- i. Action by the Conference of Bishops
 - 1) The Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops reviews such requests and reports its recommendations to the Conference of Bishops.
 - 2) The Conference of Bishops, at a regular meeting of the conference, by a majority vote acts upon requests for continuation of on-leave-from-call status. It shall report its decision to the synod seeking such a continuation.
 - 3) The action of the Conference of Bishops in approving the request of a Synod Council is valid for two years, if approved annually by the Synod Council.

C. Disability

- 7.71.05. Disability.** Ministers of Word and Service may be granted disability status, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster.
- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted disability status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 7.72. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:**
- ...
- g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted disability status, was listed when last called, or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church. ...**

1. Introduction

Disability roster status is an ecclesial determination granted by the Synod Council upon endorsement by the synod bishop in keeping with their constitutional authority. Such determinations are independent of the denial or granting of disability status by any health plan or benefits provider.

2. Disability roster status

- a. Disability roster status is discretionary, and there is no right or entitlement to such roster status even when disability benefits have been granted by a health plan or benefits provider.
- b. A minister of Word and Service who seeks disability roster status shall submit a written request to the synod bishop for such status. The request from the minister should include the medical diagnosis, benefits decision, if any, of Portico Benefit Services or other benefits provider, and other pertinent information regarding the minister's disability. The synod bishop has sole discretion to determine whether to recommend to the Synod Council that such status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the council, in executive session if deemed necessary. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its sole discretion, whether to grant disability roster status.
- c. Disability roster status may be granted even though the minister has not submitted a request to the bishop or disability benefits have been denied by a health plan or benefits provider (*e.g.*, 7.75.c., †S14.18.c., *C9.05.c.).
- d. The continuation of disability roster status granted to a minister of Word and Service is subject to review at any time and shall be reviewed in the event that disability benefits are terminated. Disability roster status granted to a minister of Word and Service may be terminated by the Synod Council upon recommendation by the synod bishop or in the event the minister accepts a call.
- e. The transfer of the roster status of a minister with disability roster status may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- f. If the disability roster status ceases, a minister who is not under call or has not received and accepted a call, should request on-leave-from-call status or retired status, if eligible, in accordance with the established processes.

D. Retirement

7.71.04. Retirement. Ministers of Word and Service may retire upon attaining the earlier of age 60 or 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.72. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

...

- h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted retired status, was listed when last called, or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.**

1. Policy and procedures related to retired status

- a. A minister of Word and Service who has attained the age of 60 or who has been on the roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies for 30 or more years may be granted retired status by this church. Retired status is an ecclesial determination which may be granted by the Synod Council upon endorsement by the synod bishop in keeping with their constitutional authority. Such determinations are independent of the denial or granting of benefits under any health or retirement plan in which the minister of Word and Service may be a member.
- b. A minister of Word and Service who seeks retired roster status shall make a written request to the synod bishop no later than 45 days following the termination of the most recent call or of on-leave-from-call or disability status.
- c. The synod bishop shall determine whether the minister of Word and Service is eligible for retired status and whether, in the bishop's sole discretion, to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the Synod Council, in executive session if deemed necessary. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status.
- d. A minister of Word and Service who has been granted retired status shall retain that roster status until (1) the minister is no longer on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, (2) the minister accepts a call, or (3) the Synod Council revokes retired status upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Such revocation of a minister's retired status may occur only upon a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council, present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting.
- e. The Synod Council shall engage in a regular, periodic examination of all ministers of Word and Service on the retired roster such that each and every retired minister's status is reviewed at least once during a three-year cycle.

2. Guidelines for retired ministers of Word and Service

a. Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

A retired minister is on the roster of the synod in which last under call or in which the minister resides. The retired minister remains accountable to the synod bishop where rostered, and the minister should regularly report to the synod bishop on any activities as a minister of Word and Service.

Unless bylaw 7.71.04.b. applies, a retired minister must be a member of an ELCA congregation in order to remain on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service and remains subject to the standards for ministers of Word and Service of this church.

b. Congregational membership

A retired deacon should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. This provides an opportunity for the retired deacon to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about the deacon's retired role.

c. Compensation

Retirement benefits provided through Portico Benefit Services, combined with Social Security benefits, are intended to provide adequate compensation to ministers in retirement. Neither retired deacons nor their spouses are entitled to any compensation from any congregation or ministry previously served solely by reason of being retired or having previously served in that congregation or ministry.

d. Consultation with synod bishop

As part of the bishop's pastoral care of retired ministers of Word and Service, a synod bishop or a member of the bishop's staff is encouraged to meet with a minister at the time of retirement to discuss these guidelines, the minister's new retired status, and its implications.

e. Transfer from one synod to another

The transfer of the roster status of a rostered minister who is retired may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

IV. Removal from the roster

A. Reasons for removal

1. Death

Death of a minister of Word and Service removes the minister from the roster.

2. Resignation

A minister of Word and Service may voluntarily resign from the roster by giving written notice to the synod bishop. A resignation may not be withdrawn or rejected. No acceptance is necessary. The synod bishop responds to the notification with a letter describing the implications of resignation.

3. Lack of call or other roster status

If the call of a minister of Word and Service comes to an end and the minister does not have another call and either does not apply for, or is not granted, on-leave-from-call status, retired status, or disability status, then the minister is no longer on the roster. Likewise, if a minister's on-leave-from-call status, retired status, or disability status comes to an end or is terminated, and the minister does not have another call and either does not apply for, or is not granted another roster status, then the minister is no longer on the roster.

4. Discipline

A minister of Word and Service may be removed from the roster pursuant to the disciplinary provisions in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

5. Lack of congregational membership

A minister of Word and Service who ceases to be a member of a congregation of this church, except as provided in 7.71.04.b. and 7.71.05.b., shall be removed from the roster.

6. Dual rostering

According to ELCA bylaw 7.61.06., "Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." A minister of Word and Service of this church who enters the ministry of another church body, or who serves a group schismatic from this church or from a congregation thereof, shall cease to be a member of this church. The minister's name shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service by the synod bishop.

B. Reporting

The synod bishop shall promptly report all removals from the roster to the secretary of this church and to the next synod assembly. The synod's roster files of those removed from the roster shall be transmitted to the secretary of this church in a timely manner, except in the case of death when the file should be transmitted to the synod or regional archives.

C. Guidelines for individuals formerly rostered as ministers of Word and Service

1. The ministry of the baptized

This church affirms the integrity and importance of the ministry of the baptized. Removal of a person's name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church reflects a change of calling and function within the ministry of the baptized.

2. The ministry of Word and Service

Some individuals are called by God in the church to the public ministry of Word and Service. For a variety of reasons, there may be a time in the life of these individuals when they are no longer called by this church to serve in this ministry.

- a. When a person's name is removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of that person to serve as a minister of Word and Service of the ELCA cease.
- b. Individuals removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service may apply for reinstatement and may be reinstated.
- c. Individuals who are not under call by this church, are not on its roster of Ministers of Word and Service, and are not under the discipline of the ELCA may not function as deacons in the name of this church.

3. The participation of formerly rostered ministers

Removal from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service ends the rights and privileges this church confers at ordination. Formerly rostered individuals may continue as members of this church. Several specific changes follow:

- a. Use of this church's title of "Deacon" must be discontinued by the individual.
- b. The gifts, training, and experience of a formerly rostered individual can be valuable to a congregation. The use of these gifts in the congregation should be discussed with the synod bishop at the time the rostered minister is removed and with that person's congregational pastor in consultation with the bishop.
- c. The synod bishop is responsible to oversee and administer the work of the synod, including providing pastoral care and leadership to congregations and rostered ministers. It is, therefore, important that formerly rostered individuals consult with the synod bishop and observe synod guidelines regarding their service in this church.

See the model letters provided in the appendices.

V. Reinstatement to the roster

7.61.07. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Service shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Service in this church.

[Following is from the Candidacy Manual.]

A. Reinstatement Process

1. Reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is the responsibility of the candidacy committee of the synod where the applicant was last rostered.
2. If an applicant is seeking both reinstatement to a roster and a transfer to another synod, in accordance with *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the secretary of the ELCA and the synods involved must consent to the transfer. A transfer of candidacy that includes reinstatement requires the concurrence of both candidacy committees and both bishops.
3. In the case of an applicant whose previous rostered ministry was in one of the ELCA predecessor churches, the successor ELCA synod has the responsibility. In every case, the process begins in the synod from which the applicant left the roster or its successor.
4. In the case of an applicant whose removal from the roster was the result of one of the following:
 - a. the official disciplinary process of this church,
 - b. resignation or removal from the roster in lieu of the disciplinary process, or
 - c. application of ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06, where the person was on leave from call after conduct or allegations that could lead to disciplinary charges,then a minimum of five consecutive years without call must elapse before an application for reinstatement may be considered. The passage of five years without call does not guarantee reconsideration.

B. Application for Reinstatement

1. The applicant provides to the appropriate synod the completed Application for Reinstatement to the Roster of the ELCA, and the synod sends a copy to the Christian Community and Leadership home area for information. A Candidacy Application and a Rostered Minister Profile must be submitted online.
2. Upon receipt of the Application for Reinstatement, the synod bishop will notify the Office of the Secretary and request any pertinent information the churchwide office may have concerning the applicant.
3. With the approval of the ELCA secretary, the reinstatement process may be transferred from the synod of previous roster to the synod of current residence upon the written concurrence of both candidacy committee chairs (in consultation with members of the candidacy committee) and both synod bishops. The original synod will provide the receiving synod with all information and documentation concerning the applicant.
4. The bishop of the synod in which the reinstatement application will be considered schedules an interview with the applicant. The purpose of this interview is to determine the applicant's eligibility to be a candidate in the synod. The bishop also determines whether the application is timely.
5. In the case of an applicant where inappropriate conduct or allegations of misconduct led to resignation or removal from the roster, the synod bishop examines the applicant for indications of repentance and amendment of life as well as indication of or attempts at reconciliation with those injured by the conduct. Before proceeding with reinstatement, the bishop also documents corrective actions that have occurred. The bishop should invite comments from those directly affected by the applicant's inappropriate conduct or alleged misconduct.
6. The candidacy committee considers an applicant for reinstatement when the synod bishop forwards the application to the committee. The bishop may, in their sole discretion, decline to forward the application to the candidacy committee or may forward the application with a written statement of the bishop's opinion of the application.

C. Candidacy Committee

1. The candidacy committee will receive and review the Congregational Registration form from the congregation where the applicant is a member.
2. The committee shall determine that it has received all records and information concerning the applicant, including verification of synod records concerning the reason for removal from the roster. If synod records are incomplete, this verification may include conferring with the former bishop, with synod staff, or with the churchwide office.
3. The committee may request additional information from any source that it deems necessary to determine the applicant's readiness for ministry and suitability for reinstatement.
4. The applicant must prepare an Approval essay and submit it to the candidacy committee.
5. The committee may request a new psychological evaluation and background check when necessary. In the case of any applicant who has been off the roster or without call for more than five years, the candidacy committee will require the applicant to participate in a psychological evaluation. The expense of this evaluation is the responsibility of the applicant.
6. The candidacy committee follows the standards and procedures in the Candidacy Manual as its guide in considering a request for reinstatement. The candidacy committee interviews the applicant to explore all concerns related to reinstatement, including but not limited to:
 - a. the circumstances surrounding the removal of the applicant from the roster, including the applicant's reason(s) for leaving the roster;
 - b. the applicant's reason(s) for requesting reinstatement, with a special focus upon what has changed in the person's life, faith, attitudes, and circumstances since the time of removal;
 - c. discussion of the applicant's understanding of the specific roster in the ELCA and the applicant's willingness to serve in response to the needs of this church; and
 - d. discussion of the applicant's commitment to live according to the standards of this church, including *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.
7. The candidacy committee may request the Christian Community and Leadership home area to convene a Theological Review Panel to determine the applicant's theological readiness for Word and Service ministry. The Theological Review Panel will make a recommendation to the committee following the procedures developed by the Christian Community and Leadership home area.

D. Decision

1. The candidacy committee will decide the applicant's suitability to serve as a rostered minister of this church. This decision is one of the following:
 - a. grant approval for reinstatement upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call,
 - b. postpone approval with specific recommendations for remedial or developmental work before further consideration for reinstatement, or
 - c. deny approval for reinstatement.
2. If the decision of the candidacy committee is to deny an applicant reinstatement, that decision is final. Any such applicant who desires reconsideration must begin the process again by applying.
3. In the case of an applicant who was removed from the roster under any of the circumstances listed in V.A.4.a–c. above, if the applicant is approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee, such approval is not effective unless affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the total membership of the executive committee of the Synod Council. After the candidacy committee reports its approval and the reasons for it to the executive committee of the Synod Council, the executive committee may obtain whatever additional information or advice, including legal advice, it deems necessary before affirming the decision of the candidacy committee.

E. Approval

If approved, the candidate will complete the normal First Call paperwork and will participate in the First Call process.

If the director for candidacy in the Christian Community and Leadership home area determines that the process for reinstatement described herein has not been fully or properly completed, then the Christian Community and Leadership home area, following consultation with the synod bishop and the home area executive director, shall postpone the candidate's participation in the First Call process until all requirements are met.

1. An approved candidate is eligible for a call for a period of one year after Approval by the synod. Any delay occasioned by a postponement is not counted toward that one-year period of eligibility.
2. The process for renewal of Approval is the same as that for other candidates for rostered ministry.
3. Upon receipt and acceptance of a properly issued and duly attested letter of call, the candidate is reinstated to the appropriate roster.

See the form for “Application for Reinstatement” in the Candidacy Manual.

VI. The Deaconess Community

See “Relationships and Statement of Agreement of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada” in the appendices among “Agreements with certain churches outside the United States.”

Part Three:
Non-roster Related Matters

I. Synod-authorized Ministries

7.31.10. Synod-authorized Ministry. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not feasible to provide rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament, the synod bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the sacramental authority of the bishop as the synod’s pastor. Such an individual will be trained to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synod leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

Purpose

Synod-authorized ministry is intended to assist this church to respond pastorally and effectively to emerging opportunities in Christ’s mission, to equip the baptized to live out their vocations for the sake of the world. Synod-authorized ministry honors and respects the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament within this church as well as the ministry of the baptized to serve in their local settings to proclaim the gospel and equip the believers.

Synod-authorized ministry recognizes and honors the office of Word and Sacrament (Article V, The Augsburg Confession). While this church calls and ordains qualified persons to carry out the ministry of Word and Sacrament on behalf of the whole church, there may be times and contexts when qualified persons are called to carry out specific ministry only in their local settings for a designated period of time.

Synod-authorized ministry recognizes the need to be flexible and adapt to the ministry challenges and needs of smaller congregations and other ministry settings. And synod-authorized ministry recognizes that individuals may have the gifts and ability to serve this church through the proclamation of the gospel in a local context, but not the resources, ability or call to serve the whole church as ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament. The purpose of synod-authorized ministry is to pair the gifts of individuals with the ministry needs of local communities in order to assist them to carry out their calling to be the church in the world.

A. Identification of need for ministry

The synod identifies a congregation or other ministry setting where synod-authorized ministry may be appropriate, such as smaller congregations that do not have the resources to call an ordained pastor, congregations that are geographically isolated making collaboration difficult, congregations that are part of multi-point parishes and in need of additional pastoral leadership, or ethnic-specific communities where a pastoral leader is already recognized.

Because of the relationship of such authorized lay ministry to those serving in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, ELCA pastors and pastors of our full communion partners serving congregations within the area where this ministry need is located normally will be consulted concerning this determination.

When determining the need for a pastor in a congregation or other identified ministry where a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church is not available, synods will first consider the utilization of an ordained minister from a full communion partner church, under the guidelines related to the orderly exchange of ordained ministers.

B. Qualifications

A person invited to prepare for a synod-authorized ministry must be an active member of an ELCA congregation, preferably for at least one year. (The synod bishop may approve an exception to this rule if the individual is a member of a full communion partner congregation or ordained in another tradition.) In addition, prior to preparing to serve in synod-authorized ministry, an individual must have:

1. been recommended by the individual’s pastor and Congregation Council;
2. met with and been interviewed by synod staff and/or the synod committee responsible for the synod’s program of preparation;
3. demonstrated the ability and willingness to participate in a program of preparation leading to possible service in a synod-authorized ministry or provided satisfactory evidence of prior preparation toward the goals and standards of the program outlined in this policy;
4. submitted written responses to the questions similar to those on the candidacy Entrance Form; and
5. obtained an in-depth background check, as outlined in the Candidacy Manual.

Any individual who has resigned or been removed from rostered ministry in the ELCA in connection with alleged misconduct, or who has been denied continuance in candidacy by reason of misconduct allegations, is precluded from serving as a synod-authorized minister.

C. Synod committee for authorized ministry

A committee may be appointed by the Synod Council to provide the synod bishop with recommendations concerning the authorization of and accountability for authorized ministries within the synod.

The Synod Council or, if appointed, the synod committee determines the educational program within the synod for individuals preparing for service in an authorized ministry; determines eligibility of individuals to enter this program of preparation; and advises the bishop on the suitability of an individual for authorization and service in a synod-authorized ministry.

D. Program of preparation

The synod defines the program of preparation for synod-authorized ministry consistent with this policy. The program of preparation can be accomplished in a variety of ways including: Select Learning (an ELCA resource with online courses facilitated by ELCA seminary and college faculty), synod educational programs that utilize current rostered ministers and/or ELCA seminary and college faculty, seminaries and continuing education centers. Such programs shall prepare individuals to have knowledge and abilities in the following areas:

1. Bible;
2. Lutheran theology, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Confession of Faith and polity of the ELCA;
3. worship;
4. spiritual discernment and faith development;
5. leadership expectations and identity;
6. contextual understanding; and
7. pastoral skills including preaching, catechetics, worship leadership, visitation, pastoral care, outreach, and administration.

E. Authorization for service

When the synod has determined that a specific need exists, and with the consent of the congregation to be served, an individual may be authorized for service within the synod by the synod bishop, in consultation with the Synod Council. The bishop will authorize for this ministry only those individuals who have been well prepared or are in the process of being prepared and who will serve under supervision. Completion of a program of preparation does not mean that authorization for service will follow. There is no guarantee of service within the synod. When authorized, such service shall fulfill assigned responsibilities, and authorization shall be for a specific period of time not to exceed one year. Authorization must be reviewed annually and may be renewed on an annual basis.

Individuals who serve in synod-authorized ministry are to meet the following criteria:

1. evidence of mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ;
2. satisfactory participation in a synod program of preparation, and/or demonstration of appropriate ministry skills;
3. knowledge and acceptance of the Confession of Faith of this church; and
4. willingness to meet this church's expectations concerning the personal conduct and behavior of individuals serving in public ministry as described in "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers."

F. Letter of authorization

The bishop's authorization shall be evidenced by an appropriate letter describing the terms and conditions of the authorization. The description may limit the activities the person is authorized to perform.

G. Supervision and accountability

Accountability for synod-authorized ministry in a congregational setting is the direct responsibility of the Congregation Council. Accountability for a synod-authorized ministry in a non-congregational setting within a synod is the direct responsibility of the governing body of the entity that conducts that ministry, or if there is no such entity, the Synod Council. In all cases, a synod-authorized minister is to be under the direct supervision of a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop. The supervising minister of Word and Sacrament shall report to the governing body and seek the advice and counsel of the bishop or designated synod staff in relation to the synod-authorized minister.

H. Candidacy for rostered ministry

When, in the judgment of the authorizing bishop, synod-authorized ministers are well-suited and qualified for ordained ministry, they shall be encouraged to discern if they are being called into ordained ministry and consider entering the candidacy process. Individuals may remain active in candidacy and theological preparation while serving in a synod-authorized ministry. Individuals may discern that they are called and have the abilities to serve only in their local settings for specific periods of time. These individuals may be set apart for a different kind of ministry that still serves the needs of the faith community in a more limited and specific way that does not put them on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament. A decision not to pursue candidacy does not preclude the need for ongoing faith formation and leadership development.

I. Renewal and revocation

Renewal of authorization after one year may be given when a demonstrated need exists for its continuation. This need is determined by the synod bishop at the request and with the consent of the congregation or other ministry being served, consultation with the supervising minister of Word and Sacrament, and a review of both the ministry setting and the service of the authorized minister.

Authorization to provide ministry within the synod may be revoked at any time by the synod bishop, who need not specify the reason.

J. Marriage services

Where permitted by law, synod-authorized ministers may officiate at marriage services for members of the congregation in which they are authorized to serve, with the concurrence of the congregation and the approval of the synod bishop.

K. Other matters

Individuals may serve in a synod-authorized ministry only within the synod that has authorized that ministry. A synod may consider for authorization an individual trained and authorized by another synod, based on the individual's qualifications and ability to meet the new synod's criteria for authorized ministry.

Individuals authorized for such ministries are not to wear clerical stoles and should not wear clerical collars unless authorized by the synod bishop. The title "Pastor" is reserved for ministers of Word and Sacrament and is not to be used by synod-authorized ministers.

II. Synod/ Congregation deacons

The title “deacon” is used by this church for those who are on roster of Ministers of Word and Service. However, some synods use the term “deacon” to describe individuals trained in and recognized by local programs that focus on diaconal ministry, and some congregations use the term to describe individuals in certain governing roles. Care should be exercised in how this term is used and the expectations of those who may have this title. Ministers of Word and Service are on a roster of this church. That means that they are eligible to serve in this church under call from a congregation, Synod Council, or the Church Council. They are under the oversight of the synod bishop and have voice and vote at synod assemblies.

Synod deacons are the responsibility of the synod that authorizes and oversees their service. Since they are not on a roster of this church, they cannot transfer from synod to synod through an established mobility process. Synods should be clear with their deacons that this title and responsibility comes from the synod and is valid only in that synod. The title “deacon” will not be used by the churchwide organization in communicating with synod deacons.

Congregational deacons serve the congregation that has selected them. Normally the title is not used in addressing them in written or verbal communication. The role of a congregational deacon is defined by the congregation’s constitution and applies only during their term of service. These deacons are normally elected to a specific term and serve until their successors are elected. They have no responsibility outside of the congregation that elected them, unless the congregation elects them to serve in another capacity, i.e. voting member of a synod assembly.

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A. Agreements with certain churches outside the United States

1. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)

Inter-Lutheran Cooperation Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Inasmuch as the churches that formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), constituted in 1985, and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), constituted in 1987, have been integral parts of one another's life, continue to be one in faith and confession, and are determined to find as many ways as possible to work together and to strengthen one another as members of the Lutheran family of churches on the North American continent, it was determined that:

I. Mutual Recognition of Leadership

- A. Each church body takes appropriate steps to provide for a mutual recognition of the ordained ministry of the other church, which will be evidenced by:
 1. acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers by transfer upon receipt and acceptance of a call.
 2. acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers by transfer in the retired status.
 3. making provision so that ordained ministers may remain on the roster of the ordained ministers of one church while serving in a social service or educational agency/institution or on the staff of the other church.
 4. covenanting with one another to refuse acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers persons who have been excluded from the ordained ministry or have been denied acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers of the other church.
- B. Each church body takes the appropriate steps to recognize the seminaries of the other church as approved schools for the theological training of its candidates for the ordained ministry.
- C. Each church body takes the appropriate steps to recognize the "Deaconess Community" of the ELCA as a community that will serve both churches.
- D. Each church body takes the appropriate steps so that each church will recognize the rostered laypersons that are "certified," "commissioned," or "consecrated" by the other church.
- E. Each church body takes the appropriate steps to facilitate the mobility of pension-plan participants between the churches.

II. Interchurch Cooperation

- A. Each church body will provide for consultations between their corresponding units.
- B. Each church body will provide for the appropriate boards and program committees to explore the possibility of shared participation in the development and preparation of congregational materials.
- C. Each church body will provide for periodic conferences of the full-time elected officers will be held and that the elected officers of other Lutheran churches in North America will be invited to attend.
- D. Each church body will provide for the appropriate boards and program committees of the churches to explore the possibility of mutual cooperation in the preparation of social statements and the addressing of social concerns that have North American implications.
- E. Each church body will provide for the possibility of cooperation in the training, preparation, and continuing education for missionaries and in other appropriate areas.

Action as adopted by the constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987):

Inasmuch as the churches that formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, constituted in 1985, and are forming the new Lutheran Church in the United States, to be constituted in 1987, have been an integral part of one another's life, continue to be one in faith and confession, and are determined to find as many ways as possible to work together and to strengthen one another as members of the Lutheran family of churches on the North American continent, it is recommended that:

A. Mutual Recognition of Leadership

1. Each commission take appropriate steps to provide for a mutual recognition of ordained ministry by the churches, which will be evidenced by:
 - a. acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers by transfer upon receipt and acceptance of a call.
 - b. acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers by transfer in the retired status.

- c. making provision so that ordained ministers may remain on the roster of the ordained ministers of one church while serving in a social service or educational agency/institution or on the staff of the other church.
 - d. covenanting with one another to refuse acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers persons who have been excluded from the ordained ministry or have been denied acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers of the other church.
2. Each commission take the appropriate steps so that each church will recognize the seminaries of the other church as approved schools for the theological training of its candidates for the ordained ministry.
 3. Each commission take the appropriate steps so that each church will recognize the “Deaconess Community” of the new Lutheran church in the U.S.A. as a community that will serve both churches.
 4. Each commission take the appropriate steps so that each church will recognize the lay professionals that have been “certified” or “commissioned” by the other church.
 5. Each commission recommend to the pension committee/board that arrangements be made to facilitate the mobility of pension participants between the churches.

B. Interchurch Cooperation

1. Each commission recommend to the new churches that provision be made for consultations between their corresponding units.
2. Each commission recommend that the appropriate boards of the new churches explore the possibility of shared participation in the development and preparation of congregational materials.
3. Each commission recommend to the new churches that periodic conferences of the full-time elected officers be held and that the elected officers of other Lutheran churches in North America be invited to attend.
4. Each commission recommend that the appropriate boards of the new churches explore the possibility of mutual cooperation in the preparation of social statements and the addressing of social concerns that have North American implications.
5. Each commission recommend that the Global/World boards of the new churches explore the possibility of cooperation in the training, preparation and continuing education of missionaries and in other appropriate areas.
6. Each commission, where applicable, recommend to the ALC, AELC, LCA, and ELCIC that the recommendations listed above be honored during the period January 1, 1986-December 31, 1987.

**Relationships and Statement of Agreement
Of the Deaconess Community of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

The following statement was approved by the board of the Division for Ministry in October 1994 and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in November 1994.

- A. Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) will be approved, set apart according to the entry rite of that church, and rostered by the ELCIC.
- B. The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will service both churches for the purpose of formation and community support and will relate to the candidacy process of both churches according to the guidelines established by each church.
- C. The Deaconess Community of the ELCA will include members of both the ELCA and the ELCIC.
- D. Deaconesses serving in the ELCIC shall be in a relationship of accountability for discipline, call, and mobility with the ELCIC according to the practices of that church.
- E. There shall be mutual transferability for deaconesses who are members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA between both churches as presently exists for ordained ministers.
- F. The question of rostering needs to be determined by each church. While only members of the ELCA can be listed on the roster of the ELCA, it will be requested that the Yearbook listing of members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA include ELCIC members with appropriate designation of which church roster they are a member. The ELCIC will determine how to list its deaconesses—which may be as “diaconal ministers.”

**Transfer of Ordained Ministers Between Synods
Of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
And Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

An ordained minister may be transferred by the bishop of a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the roster of a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in the same manner employed for the transfer of such an ordained minister between two synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (*See bylaw 7.42.01.*)

Likewise, an ordained minister in good standing on the roster of a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada may be received through transfer by a bishop of a synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for service under call in this church. An ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada shall be received by transfer upon acceptance of a valid call from a congregation, Synod Council, or the Church Council of this church following the certification of their good standing on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, completion of a Rostered Minister Profile, and the approval of the bishop of the synod in which they are to serve.

The principle of full disclosure shall apply to all such transfers. It is recommended that the ELCA synod or calling body complete a criminal background check on the ordained minister. If a background check is done by the calling body, a copy should be shared with the synod.

2. Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland [EKD])

Guidelines on Candidacy Issues For German Students or Pastors from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

Introduction

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has had an agreement since 1988 regarding cooperation with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), a federation of 23 regional Lutheran, Reformed, and United Protestant churches. In recent years these churches report having more students as theologically trained graduates than there are pastoral positions and compensation available for candidates for ordination. Students who have received theological degrees in Germany, as well as pastors from German churches, continue to express interest in serving in ELCA congregations in the United States.

Concern remains with the EKD about obligations of its churches should students come to the United States to become ordained and then return to Germany expecting positions. It is essential to honor the spirit of cooperation that has been present among our churches, and the appropriate churchwide unit encourages all synods to practice diplomacy in issues related to German students with theological degrees and pastors from these German churches seeking to serve as ordained ministers in the ELCA.

“Occasional service” or “Extended Service” for German pastors may not lead to or require “Transfer” to the roster of the ELCA. Candidacy committees consider the application of such pastors seeking to Transfer, and of students from Germany who have pursued U.S. degrees and who seek ordination and service on the roster of the ELCA. Careful attention should be given to the distinctions between short-term (Occasional or Extended service) and long-term (Transfer or ordination) placements in ELCA ministries.

The particular needs of this church are an important factor in determining who is approved for rostered ministry in the ELCA. The mission of this church involves outreach, worship, service, advocacy for justice, and nurture. While the scope of our mission is global, our particular responsibility is for ministry in the United States and the Caribbean. It is essential, therefore, to have leaders who thoroughly understand and are experienced with the cultural context of this diverse area.

I. Process for Short-Term Placement

The short-term availability of ordained ministers from churches of the EKD, as established by mutual agreement, falls within two categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation and availability to meet an extended need, including service in “yoked parish” settings.

- A. Occasional Service:** An occasional situation is defined as one in which an ordained minister of a church body of the EKD may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.
- B. Extended Service:** An ordained minister of a church body of the EKD may be invited, as authorized by the synod bishop, to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time only with the consent of the member church of the EKD, and remains an ordained minister of that church body during such service. Such pastors are expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments within that ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA in a given situation.

The employing ministry site must reach an agreement on employment according to the relevant provisions of the EKD, must make adequate accommodation available, and must cover the costs of repatriation for the pastor and his or her family on the expiry of the service (Agreement between the ELCA and the EKD, Section III, 4 and 5).

II. Process for ELCA Rostering

Prior to and during the application process for service on the ELCA roster, the synod must examine the desires and goals of applicants to determine their plans for the future. A written statement from the applicant of intent to remain in the ELCA for long-term service is to be retained with the candidacy file.

- A. Pastors:** The candidacy process for those who are “Ordained in Another Lutheran Church or Another Christian Tradition” is followed for ordained pastors of the EKD churches. All guidelines should be carefully followed in partnership with the synod Candidacy Committee. The prospective candidate first meets with an Initial Assessment Panel, which includes the synod bishop (or designee), the chair of the Candidacy Committee, and one additional Candidacy Committee member. The prospective candidate visits with this panel at his or her own

expense for the purpose of mutual discernment. This meeting is held prior to the entrance interview for candidacy. The appropriate churchwide unit convenes a review panel once an entrance/endorsement decision is made by the Candidacy Committee. An approval interview is scheduled once all recommendations have been met.

- B. Students:** Students from Germany who have theological degrees who are not ordained but desire to be rostered in the ELCA must follow the normal steps of candidacy (entrance, endorsement, ELCA seminary residency, approval, etc.) with the guidance of a synod Candidacy Committee. The Candidacy Committee must consult with the appropriate churchwide unit before any candidacy decisions are made. Once an applicant is approved for entrance into candidacy, the candidate affiliates with an ELCA seminary where the candidate's academic program will be reviewed by a panel convened by the appropriate churchwide unit. The panel makes a recommendation regarding recognition of prior academic or field work, including "Spezialvikariat" and other accomplishments and study. The seminary provides direction for supervised clinical ministry and internship placements as well as for any additional preparation that may be necessary.

After all practical and academic requirements have been completed by persons seeking ELCA rostering (including internship and clinical ministry [CPE] where required), the Candidacy Committee will schedule and conduct the approval interview. The timeline for this process will vary, depending upon the background of the candidate as well as familiarity with ELCA mission and ministry. Approved candidates participate in the First Call Process of Candidates under the direction of the appropriate churchwide unit. It is expected that candidates and synods will work together to balance the needs of this church with the needs of candidates during the First Call Process.

Cultural Immersion: Any time spent in the United States prior to serving should include an immersion in the life and culture of the ELCA, including active membership in an ELCA congregation. The normal requirement of one year membership in an ELCA congregation is the guideline for adequate time to become familiar with the practice of ministry in the ELCA. Providing opportunities for German students to develop familiarity and skills so that they may serve well in ways that are fulfilling and effective in the ELCA is part of the responsibility of the synod Candidacy Committee as well as the congregation. For those who have theological degrees from Germany seeking ordination and rostering in the ELCA, the policies of this church regarding ordination must be observed, and it is preferred that the service of ordination be in an ELCA congregation as a way of further assimilation into the life of this church.

Record Keeping: The appropriate churchwide unit maintains records for tracking German students and monitors the effectiveness of this cooperative effort. The synod Candidacy Committee should report such candidates and their progress to the appropriate churchwide unit. Candidacy decisions and recommendations from the Review Panel should be reported to the unit.

III. Consultation with the Parent Church in Germany

Extended service contracts can be authorized only with the consent of the EKD. Likewise, for admission to the ELCA roster, the synod bishop must request a letter of reference from the candidate's parent church body regarding any EKD pastor who seeks to transfer or German student who seeks to be approved for ordained ministry in the ELCA. The EKD will provide comments and observations regarding the individual's relationship with the church. This should occur at the beginning of the candidacy process.

Correspondence should be directed to:

Evangelical Church in Germany

Secretary for North America Ecumenical Relations and Ministries Abroad

Herrenhäuser Strasse 12

30419 Hannover, Germany

Tel: (49) 0511-2796-0 Fax: (49) 0511-2796-707

A copy of this letter from the synod bishop must be sent to the Service and Justice unit, ELCA, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631.

IV. Immigration Issues

While applicants for service in ELCA ministry sites do not have to be U.S. citizens, they must pursue the appropriate immigration status with the government to allow for employment within the United States. The United States government has restrictions regarding those who seek change in status for religious purposes. It is essential that applicants address this issue and report their status to the synod bishop or, in the case of persons seeking admission to the roster of ordained ministers, to their Candidacy Committee.

Original policy adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America November 14, 1999 [CC99.11.83n]; revised policy adopted by the Church Council November 15, 2009 [CC09.11.97].

B. Effective dates of changes in status

I. Rostered Minister Leaving Call

- a. For new call:** If a rostered minister leaves a call for a new call, the first day of the new call shall be the first day worked at the new call, and the last day of the old call shall be the previous day.
- b. Without new call:**
 1. If a rostered minister leaves a call without a new call, and does not apply for on-leave-from-call, disability, or retired status within 45 days, the last day of the old call shall be the last day worked, and the rostered minister shall be deemed to have no longer been on the roster effective the first day after the last day of the old call.
 2. If a rostered minister leaves a call without a new call, and applies for on-leave-from-call, disability, or retired status within 45 days of the end of the old call:
 - a) And the requested status is granted, then the last day of the old call shall be the last day worked, and the rostered minister shall be deemed to have the granted status effective the first day after the last day of the old call.
 - b) And the requested status is denied, then the last day of the old call shall be the last day worked, and the rostered minister shall be deemed to no longer be on the roster effective the date that the requested status was denied.
 3. In determining the last day worked at the old call, payment of severance or accrued vacation is not considered, and the focus is on the last day worked.
 4. Rostered ministers should contact Portico Benefit Services or their benefits provider regarding the process for benefit changes.

II. Rostered Minister Leaving On-Leave-from-Call, Disability or Retired Status

- a. For new call:** If a rostered minister leaves on-leave-from-call, disability, or retired status for a new call, the first day of the new call shall be the first day worked at the new call and the last day of their prior status shall be the previous day.
- b. Without new call:**
 1. If a rostered minister is removed from on-leave-from-call, disability, or retired status and the rostered minister does not have a new call, and does not apply for a new status within 45 days, then the rostered minister shall be deemed to have no longer been on the roster effective the date of removal from the prior status, and the last day of the prior status shall be the previous day.
 2. If a rostered minister is removed from on-leave-from-call, disability, or retired status, and the rostered minister does not have a new call, and applies for a new status within 45 days from the removal from the prior status:
 - a) And the requested status is granted, then the last day of the prior status shall be the date on which the rostered minister was removed from the prior status or on which the prior status expired, and the first day of the new status shall be the next day.
 - b) And the requested status is denied, then the rostered minister shall be deemed to have no longer been on the roster effective the date of removal from the prior status, and the last day of the prior status shall be the previous day.
 3. If a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status expires without being renewed, and the rostered minister does not have a new call, and does not apply for retired or disability status prior to the expiration of the on-leave-from-call status, then the rostered minister shall be deemed to have no longer been on the roster effective the date of the expiration of on-leave-from-call status, and the last day of the on-leave-from-call status shall be the previous day.
 4. If a rostered minister's on-leave-from-call status expires without being renewed, and the rostered minister does not have a new call, and applies for retired or disability status prior to the expiration of the on-leave-from-call status:
 - a) And the requested status is granted, then the first day of the new status shall be the day on which the new status was granted, and last day of on-leave-from-call status shall be the previous day.
 - b) And the requested status is denied, then the rostered minister shall be deemed to have no longer been on the roster effective the date of expiration of on-leave-from-call status, and the last day of the on-leave-from-call status shall be the previous day.
 5. Rostered ministers should contact Portico Benefit Services or their benefits provider regarding the process for benefit changes.

C. Resources for familiarization with the life and practice of the ELCA

Resources. In consultation with seminary faculties, the appropriate churchwide unit recommends resources such as these to assist synod bishops in familiarizing ordained ministers of another church body with the life and practice of the ELCA:

Resources of the ELCA

- *The Book of Concord*
- *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, particularly Chapters 2–7, and 9
- *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*
- *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers*
- “The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament”

Theological and historical perspectives

- *The Annotated Luther*, 6 volumes
- Single works of Martin Luther:
 - Kirsi Stjerna, ed. *The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther, 1529*
 - Mark D. Tranvik ed., *The Freedom of a Christian*
- Lowell G. Almen, *One Great Cloud of Witnesses! You and Your Congregation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*
- Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 vols.
- Carl E. Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology*
- Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History*
- Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story*
- Kathryn A. Kleinhans, ed., *Together by Grace: Introducing the Lutherans*
- Craig Nesson, *Shalom Church: The Body of Christ as Ministering Community*
- L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans (Denominations in America)*
- Martin Lohmann, *Book of Harmony: Spirit and Service in the Lutheran Confessions*
- Albert Pero and Ambrose Moyo, eds., *Theology and the Black Experience: The Lutheran Heritage Interpreted by African and African-American Theologians*
- Kirsi Stjerna, *Women of the Reformation*
- Mary Streufert, ed., *Transformative Lutheran Theologies: Feminist, Womanist, and Mujerista Perspectives*
- Marit Trelstad, ed., *Cross Examinations*
- Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther’s Catechisms: Forming the Faith*
- Timothy J. Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther: An Introductory Guide*

D. Invitation to extended service



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

**LETTER OF INVITATION TO EXTENDED SERVICE
FOR AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF A FULL COMMUNION PARTNER CHURCH BODY**

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,
AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

With prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God's will,

a synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
extends to you this invitation to serve as

We invite you to serve, as authorized by the synod bishop, under contract in this setting in accord with the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for an ordained minister of a full communion partner church body. In so doing, you are expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in this setting in a manner that is consistent with the confession of faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. You are to lead faithfully in worship; to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; to provide pastoral care; to equip the congregation for witness; to nurture increased support for the work of the whole church; and to guide in proclaiming God's love in word and deed. Therefore, you are to be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, in the use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service, and in holy living.

With this invitation, we pledge our prayers, love, esteem, and personal support of the ministry entrusted to you. Specific responsibilities, compensation, benefits, and conditions of this invitation are contained in the contract for service. In testimony to this invitation, we have subscribed our names on this _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord _____.

Bishop

Secretary

Synod

Date of bishop's signing

E. Military chaplain returning to a congregation

Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
218 D St SE, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20003
202-626-3846

Suggestions for Chaplain Reentry into the Congregation

Operational commitments assigned to the Armed Forces of the United States (Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard) in recent years have been at a level not experienced in several decades. Large numbers of Reserve and National Guard chaplains have been activated and had to leave their parishes for considerable periods of time, some up to 18 months.

Suggestions have been developed for chaplains and congregations in time of military involuntary call-up under the title “Suggestions for Chaplains and Congregations in Time of Military Involuntary Call-up” (Part One, p. 27).

Congregations whose pastors are members of the Reserve or National Guard should have a standing “Mobilization Agreement” to provide for the needs of the pastor and family as well as the congregation during periods of mobilization.

When the period of active duty has been completed and the pastor returns to the parish the critical process of reentry begins. The form it may take and the time required for its completion will vary with each pastor and congregation; some estimates are three to six months. The experiences may range from frequent boredom to long periods of tension and tragedy. The effects of these experiences can be long-lasting, and chaplains are not immune to post-traumatic stress syndrome.

As marriage partners are advised to have patience with each other as they both make their way through the reentry process, the same patience is needed on the parts of pastors and congregations. The most common instinct is the desire to “pick up where we left off and get on with it” as though nothing had changed in any of the relationships. Every effort should be made to resist this temptation since all persons in the relationships have changed and need time to get to know one another again. If a “returned chaplain” is available in the area, every effort should be made to invite the chaplain to meet with the congregation and Congregation Council to talk about the experience of deployment and reentry.

If possible, congregations are urged to make provision for the pastor and family to go away together for a couple of weeks and get reacquainted after the separation. This is the primary relationship and should be addressed first. It may also offer opportunity for the pastor to get body and emotions in the same place. With the rapid means of transportation available, it is possible for a person to be physically at home but emotionally still half a world away. Bishops should consider organizing retreats for returning chaplains and their spouses, perhaps on a regional level, led by a skilled counselor who would help the couples process their experiences and adjust to ministry in the parish.

Perhaps the next planned event would be a welcome-home celebration, a Sunday brunch event at church, or even an overnight retreat for the pastor, where the returning chaplain can listen as congregation council members describe how they experienced the time of separation, and the pastor’s experience might also be shared. Special attention should be paid to the new agreements that have been worked out within the congregation during this period. If several functions formerly performed by the pastor have been assumed by members of the congregation, some renegotiation will probably be necessary. When done with care and sensitivity, this process may produce new models of ministry to the benefit of the congregation.

For the congregation, the “get-acquainted period” that was necessary when the pastor first arrived in the parish will need to be repeated in a shorter form at this time, perhaps the three to six months mentioned previously.

The pastor will experience some strong “pulls” in various directions:

- From the congregation. Some members of the congregation will require extended amounts of the pastor’s time so the pastor can be brought up to date with the events in the member’s life. The pastor must make special efforts to provide for this time.
- From the unit. Strong bonds are formed when people are together in a hostile environment. As the chaplain assisted the members of the unit to deal with events and experiences during the deployment, so she or he usually will feel the obligation to assist them in their family and community re-entry process that may be prolonged and quite difficult. A chaplain’s presence is in greater demand following a deployment than preceding it. Congregations can render valuable ministry to the community through sharing their pastor and facilities to assist soldiers as they navigate their individual re-entry processes through such support activity.

The pastor will probably need to adjust to a different pace and focus upon return. Military operations are frequently characterized by a high level of activity and an intense focus on a task. The pace in most congregations is slower and the focus more diffuse compared with military operations. This will call for some adjustment on the part

of the returning chaplain, who may experience the feeling of being “at loose ends” when the focus of activity is not as sharp.

The pastor may have experienced long periods of extreme tension produced by attempting to be aware of any imminent danger and to instantly react appropriately. Ordinary sounds that occur without warning may be interpreted differently by persons returning from a combat theater and may produce unusual reactions. It is not unusual for such persons to have trouble sleeping or have nightmares for a period following their return.

It would not be unusual for questions to arise in the hearts of both pastor and parishioners as to whether this relationship still fits and is workable. All parties are urged to withhold judgment for some time and let the re-entry process unfold.

A period of separation, be it between spouses or pastor and congregation, tends to amplify the existing relationship. If the relationship was warm, close, and caring prior to the separation it will probably be even more so upon return. By the same token, if the relationship was troubled prior to the deployment, it usually will be even more difficult at the end of the separation.

Excellent resources are provided by the Army Chief of Chaplains and Family Readiness resources. These can be found on the internet: <https://www.army.mil/soldierresources/>

Essential elements of the process:

- Be patient with one another.
- Listen intently to what the other person is saying.
- Speak candidly and lovingly to one another.
- Hold on to the unity you have been given in Christ.

F. Sample letters

*(Draft letter of **completion of call** of ministers of Word and Sacrament)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear Pastor [Name]:

Greetings in this season of [*name of season in church year*]. Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Congratulations upon your acceptance of a new call to serve [*specify new call*]. The weeks ahead will likely be filled with the excitement and anticipation that come from such a transition as you begin to envision what you can and should do in your new ministry context.

Please remember that members of your current congregation are still in the early stages of processing the announcement of your resignation. They have not had the same preparation for this transition that you have had, and some may be finding it difficult to conceive of anyone else providing their pastoral care. A few people may even approach you (if they have not done so already) to ask if you would return to the congregation to conduct a wedding or preside at a funeral.

While it may be tempting to agree to continue in such a pastoral relationship, upon the effective date of your resignation you are no longer the pastor of the congregation and do not have the authority to make such commitments. Receive these requests as affirmations of your past service to the congregation, but explain that, in light of †S14.19. in the *Constitution for Synods*, you are not at liberty to accept their invitation. Assure the parishioner that pastoral care will be provided.

You may find it helpful to use the service of “Farewell and Godspeed” prior to your departure from the congregation. Whether incorporated into the usual Sunday liturgy or placed within a special service to celebrate your ministry within the congregation, consider including a moment when you return to representatives of the congregation those symbols of the ministerial office presented at your installation, along with a parallel response, “I am no longer called to be among you to baptize ... proclaim the Good News ... preside at Holy Communion.” It sometimes is an emotional experience as the procession moves from font, to pulpit, to altar, but this signals an important change in your relationship with the members of the congregation and should help to discourage inappropriate invitations to return, allowing you to focus fully upon your new context for ministry.

Please take care to assure that the parochial record of pastoral acts you conducted within the congregation is up to date. As required by †S14.21. of this synod’s constitution, the secretary of the congregation shall attest in writing to me that the record was received, in good order, before you can be installed in a new call. Also, be mindful of the necessity to “make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations” to this congregation (†S14.22.) before your departure.

Thank you for your years of service as a minister of Word and Sacrament. Be assured that this church remains grateful to you for your pastoral ministry. May God bless you in your new call.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [*name of synod*] Synod

*(Draft letter regarding **removal from the roster** of Ministers of Word and Sacrament—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am writing to inform you of the removal of your name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA. This action has been taken in keeping with the constitutional and bylaw provisions that govern the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.41.09. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Sacrament. Therefore, you are to function as a layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination have ceased.

As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, you must no longer perform any duties or acts associated with ordained ministry. You are not to use the title "Pastor" or "the Rev." Neither are you to baptize, preside at Holy Communion, perform marriages (unless otherwise authorized by state law), or wear vestments or clothing normally associated with a minister of Word and Sacrament, such as a stole or clerical collar.

If you were asked to substitute due to the absence of a pastor, you could do so only as a layperson serving without clerical vestments in leading a Service of the Word. Only in the most unusual circumstance, and then **only** with the explicit permission of the synod bishop, could you preside for Holy Communion, in keeping with the policy of this church as defined in "The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament."

You must not remain a member of the congregation that you were serving at the time of your removal. Transferring your membership to another congregation assists the current leaders and members in carrying out their ministry. It also provides an opportunity for you to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about your role. It is your responsibility to sever ties with your former congregation.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter to ministers **on leave from call**, informing them of their **removal from the roster** of Ministers of Word and Sacrament—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As required under the provisions that govern the rosters of this church, ministers of Word and Sacrament who are without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster by annual action of the Synod Council, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, for a maximum of three years. You have now reached the end of the privilege of that on-leave-from-call status.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.41.09. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Sacrament. Therefore, you are to function as a layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination have ceased.

As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, you must no longer perform any duties or acts associated with ordained ministry. You are not to use the title "Pastor" or "the Rev." Neither are you to baptize, preside at Holy Communion, perform marriages (unless otherwise authorized by state law), or wear vestments or clothing normally associated with a minister of Word and Sacrament, such as a stole or clerical collar.

If you were asked to substitute due to the absence of a pastor, you could do so only as a layperson serving without clerical vestments in leading a Service of the Word. Only in the most unusual circumstance, and then **only** with the explicit permission of the synod bishop, could you preside for Holy Communion, in keeping with the policy of this church as defined in "The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament."

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter of notice of **resignation from roster** of Ministers of Word and Sacrament—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I write to acknowledge your letter of resignation from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [Name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.41.09. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Sacrament. Therefore, you are to function as a layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination have ceased.

As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, you must no longer perform any duties or acts associated with ordained ministry. You are not to use the title "Pastor" or "the Rev." Neither are you to baptize, preside at Holy Communion, perform marriages (unless otherwise authorized by state law), or wear vestments or clothing normally associated with a minister of Word and Sacrament, such as a stole or clerical collar.

If you were asked to substitute due to the absence of a pastor, you could do so only as a layperson serving without clerical vestments in leading a Service of the Word. Only in the most unusual circumstance, and then **only** with the explicit permission of the synod bishop, could you preside for Holy Communion, in keeping with the policy of this church as defined in "The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament."

You must not remain a member of the congregation that you were serving at the time of your resignation. Transferring your membership to another congregation assists the current leaders and members in carrying out their ministry. It also provides an opportunity for you to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about your role. It is your responsibility to sever ties with your former congregation.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

xc: [Name,] secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter of notice of **removal from roster** of Ministers of Word and Sacrament due to **joining another church body**—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am writing to inform you of the removal of your name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA. This action has been taken in keeping with the constitutional and bylaw provisions that govern the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [Name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.41.09. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer an ELCA pastor. As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, you must no longer perform any duties or acts associated with the ministry of Word and Sacrament within the ELCA.

If you were asked to substitute due to the absence of a pastor, you could do so only with the explicit permission of the synod bishop.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.06. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod]

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

(Draft letter of **completion of call** of ministers of Word and Service—revised version March 2020)

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear Deacon [Name]:

Greetings in this season of [name of season in church year]. Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Congratulations upon your acceptance of a new call to serve [specify new call]. The weeks ahead will likely be filled with the excitement and anticipation that come from such a transition as you begin to envision what you can and should do in your new ministry context.

Please remember that members of your current congregation are still in the early stages of processing the announcement of your resignation. They have not had the same preparation for this transition that you have had, and some may be finding it difficult to conceive of anyone else providing their [specify role]. A few people may even approach you (if they have not done so already) to ask if you would return to the congregation to participate in various functions.

While it may be tempting to agree to continue in such a relationship, upon the effective date of your resignation you are no longer a deacon of the congregation and should not make such commitments. Receive these requests as affirmations of your past service to the congregation, but explain that, in light of †S14.44. in the *Constitution for Synods*, you are not at liberty to accept their invitation. Assure the parishioner that ministerial leadership will be provided.

You may find it helpful to use the service of “Farewell and Godspeed” prior to your departure from the congregation, whether incorporated into the usual Sunday liturgy or placed within a special service to celebrate your ministry within the congregation. It sometimes is an emotional experience, but this signals an important change in your relationship with the members of the congregation and should help to discourage inappropriate invitations to return, allowing you to focus fully upon your new context for ministry.

Please be mindful of the necessity to “make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations” to this congregation (†S14.45.) before your departure.

Thank you for your years of service as a minister of Word and Service. Be assured that this church remains grateful to you for your ministry. May God bless you in your new call.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

*(Draft letter regarding **removal from the roster** of Ministers of Word and Service—revised version March 2020))*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am writing to inform you of the removal of your name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA. This action has been taken in keeping with the constitutional and bylaw provisions that govern the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.71.06. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Service. Therefore, you are to function as a non-rostered layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination/consecration/commissioning have ceased. As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, you are not to use the title "Deacon."

You should not remain a member of the congregation that you were serving at the time of your removal. Transferring your membership to another congregation assists the current leaders and members in carrying out their ministry. It also provides an opportunity for you to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about your role. It is your responsibility to sever ties with your former congregation.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.61.07. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter to ministers **on leave from call**, informing them of their **removal from the roster** of Ministers of Word and Service—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As required under the provisions that govern the rosters of this church, ministers of Word and Service who are without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster by annual action of the Synod Council, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, for a maximum of three years. You have now reached the end of the privilege of that on-leave-from-call status.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [*_name*], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, effective [*specify date*].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.71.06. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Service. Therefore, you are to function as a non-rostered layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination/consecration/commissioning have ceased. As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, you are not to use the title "Deacon."

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.61.07. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [*name of synod*] Synod

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter of notice of **resignation from roster** of Ministers of Word and Service—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I write to acknowledge your letter of resignation from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying [name], secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, effective [specify date].

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.71.06. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Service. Therefore, you are to function as a non-rostered layperson in a congregation. Because you are no longer on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service, the privileges and responsibilities conveyed at ordination/consecration/commissioning have ceased. As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, you are not to use the title "Deacon."

You should not remain a member of the congregation that you were serving at the time of your resignation. Transferring your membership to another congregation assists the current leaders and members in carrying out their ministry. It also provides an opportunity for you to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about your role. It is your responsibility to sever ties with your former congregation.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.61.07. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the [name of synod] Synod

xc: [Name], secretary of the ELCA

*(Draft letter of notice of **removal from roster** of Ministers of Word and Service due to **joining another church body**—revised version March 2020)*

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear *[Name]*:

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am writing to inform you of the removal of your name from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA. This action has been taken in keeping with the constitutional and bylaw provisions that govern the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

By a copy of this letter, I am notifying *[name]*, secretary of this church, that your name is to be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, effective *[specify date]*.

Your roster file will be retained by the secretary of this church, as prescribed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.71.06. If you so desire, you may provide annually to the secretary of this church your current address and other appropriate information for that roster file.

Please bear in mind that, from the perspective of this church, you are no longer a minister of Word and Service. As someone who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, you must no longer perform any duties or acts associated with the ministry of Word and Service within the ELCA.

Should you desire at some point in the future to seek reinstatement to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA, application will need to be made to the bishop of this synod for referral to the Candidacy Committee. The possibility of reinstatement is governed by ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.61.07. and other applicable policies that outline steps in that process.

Removal of your name from the roster brings to a close, in some sense, a particular chapter in your life. May our gracious God grant you wisdom, strength, and courage in your future endeavors.

In Christ,

[Name]

Bishop of the *[name of synod]* Synod

xc: *[Name]*, secretary of the ELCA

G. Sample forms



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

**AUTHORIZATION AND REPORT OF ORDINATION OF A
MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

In accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Constitution of the _____ Synod (fS8.12.c.), the ordination of approved candidate, _____, was authorized by me on _____ to take place on _____ (date of ordination) at _____ (place)

Bishop _____ of the _____ Synod was authorized by me to conduct the ordination on behalf of the synod of call.

(Authorizing and Rostering Bishop signature)

(Synod)

This certifies that ordinand, _____ (name), having received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call to pastoral ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve

_____ (name and location of congregation(s))

_____ (congregation identification number(s))

as _____ (job title) was ordained a Minister of the Church of Christ in the Office of Word and Sacrament by the laying on of hands by Bishop _____ and other pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on _____ (date) in _____ (i.e. name of congregation)

at _____ (i.e. location of congregation)

(Signature of Ordaining Bishop)

Home address of ordinand (home address will only be shared if selected below to be the roster address):

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Which address should be the roster address? Home Work
(i.e. published in the directory, roster look-up)

Effective start date of active ministry if later than date of ordination: _____

Notice to Rostering Bishop

Prior to Ordination:

Arrangements for time and other details are to be made mutually between candidate and ordaining bishop following authorization and in consultation with rostering bishop (see †S14.11.).

- 1) The authorizing bishop shall complete bottom portion of form in consultation with the ordinand; retain one copy; and provide a copy to ordaining bishop, if different from authorizing bishop.
- 2) Ordaining bishop signs as "officiant" and retains one copy; ordinand retains one copy; ordaining bishop sends a copy to rostering bishop.

Note: Rostering Bishop will forward ordination certificate to ordinand.

Following Ordination:

The rostering bishop shall:

- 1) Retain one copy for synod records;
- 2) Send or email one copy to the Office of the Secretary;
- 3) Mail one copy to:
Benefits Administration
Portfolio Benefit Services
Attn: Kim Eggen
800 Marquette Ave Ste 1050
Minneapolis, MN 55402

8765 WEST HIGGINS ROAD • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60631-4101 • PHONE 800-638-3522 • ELCA.ORG

Rev 9/12/2019



SYNOD TRANSFER FORM FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS

The top part of this form is to be completed by the **bishop of the synod from which** the rostered minister is transferring.

_____, minister of Word and Sacrament
(name) minister of Word and Service
of the _____ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
(synod) in America, is transferred to the _____
(synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

(Signature of the bishop of the transferring synod)

(date of signing)

The bottom part of this form is to be completed by the **bishop of the synod into which** the rostered minister is transferring.

Effective date of transfer (the date the rostered minister begins service in accordance with the call)

(effective date)

This minister has been called to congregational ministry at _____
(name of congregation) (congregation ID)
has been called to noncongregational ministry at _____
(name of organization)
(job title)
is retired, on leave, or on disability _____
(mailing address)
(city, state, zip code)

(Signature of the bishop of the receiving synod)

(date of signing)

After completing this form, the receiving synod office retains the original and sends the second copy to the Office of the Secretary. The third copy is returned to the synod office from which the rostered minister is transferred. The fourth copy should be sent to the transferred minister.

H. Roster Committee Considerations

In reviewing requests for exceptions to the three-year congregational service bylaw, the Roster Committee will:

Expect a written request for an exception be submitted at least one month before a regular meeting of the Roster Committee.

Give consideration to the experience of the candidate including the length, breadth, and effective “pastoral” leadership experience of internship or other regular congregational experience.

Request, when appropriate, that a minister of Word and Sacrament receiving an exception give 5–10 hours of non-stipendiary service per month to a nearby congregation.

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