

## GUIDELINES RELATED TO SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED OR LICENSED MINISTRIES

These guidelines relate to bylaws 7.61.01. and 7.61.02. dealing with synodically authorized ministries. These ministries include licensed ministry of Word and Sacrament, as well as diaconal ministry authorized by the synod. These ministries exist to provide pastoral or diaconal leadership for a congregation or other ministry of this church when needs exist within a synod which exceed those which can be met by rostered persons. Those who provide such ministry within a synod are not rostered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (unless already serving on a roster of this church) but are authorized by the synod to provide a specific ministry within a particular setting for a specific period of time.

### 7.60. LICENSURE AND SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

7.61.01. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this

church where it is not possible to provide appropriate ordained pastoral leadership, the synodical 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 Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person rostered in other rostered ministry, or a non-rostered 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 pastor appointed by the synodical 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 and licensed 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 synodical 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.

7.61.02. When needed to provide for diaconal ministry as part of a congregation or ministry of this church

where it is not possible for such ministry to be provided by appropriately rostered lay ministry, the synodical 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 Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a non-rostered person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer such non-sacramental ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by an ordained minister appointed by the synodical bishop and shall be trained and authorized to fulfill a particular ministry for a specific period of time in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synodical leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be renewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

[See also Principle 40 and related sections in “The Use of the Means of Grace—A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament,” which was adopted as policy by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.]

1. **Identification of Need:** Mission and ministry needs within the synod that are unable to be met by rostered persons are identified by the synod. or congregation council; it also may come from the synodical bishop or synod staff person. Such persons are not self-selected.
2. **Invitation to Service:** An individual who demonstrates the potential for service is identified and invited to consider entering a program of preparation for service within the synod. This invitation is normally made by the person's pastor
3. **Qualifications:** Normally, a person invited to prepare for a synodically authorized ministry has been an active member of an ELCA congregation for at least one year. Prior to entering the synod's program of preparation an individual must have:

- a. Been recommended by the individual's pastor and congregation council;
- b. Consulted with synodical staff and the synodical committee responsible for the synod's program of preparation; and
- c. The ability and willingness to participate in a program of preparation leading to possible service in a synodically authorized ministry.

4. **Synodical Committee for Authorized Ministry:**

An appropriate synodical board or committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council to provide the synodical bishop with recommendations concerning the authorization and accountability for authorized ministries within the synod. This committee may be a sub-committee of the synodical candidacy committee; its functions, however, are distinct from that of the candidacy committee.

The synodical committee determines the program of preparation within the synod for persons considered for service in an authorized ministry, determines the eligibility for individuals to enter a program of preparation, and advises the bishop on the suitability of an individual for service in a synodically authorized ministry.

5. **Program of Preparation:** The synod defines the program of preparation leading to either a licensed ministry of Word and Sacrament or another synodically authorized ministry. Such programs of preparation normally include study in the following areas:

- a. Bible;
- b. Lutheran theology, polity, and the Lutheran Confessions;
- c. Worship;
- d. Spiritual discernment and faith development;
- e. Leadership expectations and identity;
- f. Contextual understanding; and
- g. Skill development, e.g., preaching, catechetics, worship leadership, visitation, pastoral care, missions.

The program of preparation can be accomplished in a variety of ways including educational programs that utilize current rostered leaders within the synod, ELCA seminaries and continuing education centers, the ELCA *Select* curriculum, and other identified resources.

Upon satisfactory completion of the synodical program of preparation, an individual may be

certified as available for service within the synod. There is no guarantee of service within the synod and completion of a program of preparation does not mean that authorization for service will follow.

Persons may participate in a synodical program of preparation to be enriched and equipped to serve within their congregations and in the world in the ministry of the baptized with no intention of becoming licensed or authorized.

6. **Authorization for Service:** Upon satisfactory completion of the synod's program of preparation, and where a specific need exists, an individual may be authorized for service within the synod.

The synodical bishop, at the request and recommendation of the appropriate synodical committee established to oversee synodically authorized ministries, may then authorize an individual to serve in a congregation or other ministry within the synod. Such service shall fulfill assigned responsibilities and shall be for a specific period of time not to exceed one year, unless terminated earlier. Authorized or licensed ministries that may be considered include:

- a. Lay Minister of the Word
- b. Lay Minister of Word and Sacrament
- c. Worship Leader
- d. Catechist
- e. Evangelist
- f. Synodical Missionary
- g. Synodical Deacon

Persons who are considered for a synodically authorized ministry must meet the criteria for public ministry within a congregation or other ministry of this church, namely:

- a. evidence of mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ;
- b. satisfactory completion of the synodical program of preparation, including demonstration of appropriate ministry skills;
- c. knowledge and acceptance of the Confession of Faith of this church; and
- d. willingness to meet this church's expectations concerning the personal conduct and behavior of persons serving in public ministry ("Vision and Expectations").

A person authorized by the synodical bishop is then installed in such service.

7. **Supervision and Accountability:** Accountability and supervision for synodically authorized ministry in a congregational setting is the direct responsibility of the Congregation Council.

Accountability and supervision for a synodically authorized ministry in a non-congregational setting with 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 synodically authorized ministry is to be under the direct supervision of an ordained minister appointed by the appropriate governing body with the concurrence of the synodical bishop. The supervising ordained minister shall report to the governing body and may seek the advice and counsel of the synodical bishop or appropriate synodical staff person.

8. **Renewal and Revocation:** Renewal of authorization after one year is given only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation. This need is determined by the synodical bishop at the request and with the consent of the congregation or other ministry within the synod being served, after consultation with the appropriate committee 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 synodical bishop, who need not specify the reason.

9. **Letter of Authorization:** The authorization or license may be evidenced by an appropriate letter describing the terms and conditions of the authorization or license. The description also may limit or prohibit activities to be conducted.
10. **Relation to Other Policy:** Nothing in these guidelines shall limit the authorization of a synodical bishop to license lay persons as permitted under this church's policy on sacramental practices, "The Use of the Means of Grace," which was adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.
11. **Other Matters:** Persons may serve in a synodically authorized or licensed 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. Persons authorized for such ministries will not wear clerical garb (e.g., clerical collars) or clerical stoles. The title "Pastor" is reserved for ordained ministers of Word and

Sacrament, "Associate in Ministry" is reserved for commissioned associates in ministry, "Diaconal Minister" for rostered diaconal ministers, and "Deaconess" for rostered ELCA deaconesses, and are titles not to be used by synodically authorized ministers. Synodically authorized or licensed ministers are not to offer counseling as a part of their ministries.

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