

ELCA CONSTITUTION

Chapter 7. MINISTRY

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. ORDAINED MINISTRY

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.

An ordained minister 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. An ordained minister shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.23.

The standards for acceptance and continuance of pastors in the ordained ministry 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 ordained ministers who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.22., 7.23., 7.30., and 7.31., and related bylaws.

7.30. STANDARDS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS

7.31.

In accordance with the description of an ordained minister stated in 7.22., pastors as ordained ministers shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.31.10.

Basic Standards

7.31.11.

Persons admitted to and continued in the ordained ministry 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.

7.31.12.

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every ordained minister 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) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 7) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications;
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - 5) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 6) with the council, administer discipline.

7.31.13.

Preparation and Approval. Except as provided below, a candidate for ordination as a pastor 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 for at least a year before being approved for call;
- c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America, including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
- d. completed at least one year of residency 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;
- 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 adoption 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.

7.31.14.

Admission under Other Circumstances. Candidates for ordination as pastors or for reception 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.

7.31.15.

Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement to the ordained ministry as a pastor, 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 synodical 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 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 sub-sequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a pastor in this church.

7.31.16.

On Leave from Call. An ordained minister 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 ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the ordained minister 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 synodical bishop, an ordained minister who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers 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 synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, an ordained minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ordained ministry, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers of this church for a maximum of six years.

c. Family Leave: An ordained minister who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such an ordained minister who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the ordained minister or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers 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.

7.31.17.

Ordination in Unusual Circumstances. For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synodical bishop may provide for the ordination by another pastor 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 ordained ministry. 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 synodical 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.

7.31.20.

Invitation to Service

7.31.21.

In accord with bylaw 8.72.11. and following, an ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of Invitation to Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.40. CALLS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS

7.41.

Letters of Call. Letters of call to ordained ministers of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of ordained ministers 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.

7.41.10.

General Categories

7.41.11.

Service under Call. An ordained minister of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synodical council or 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.

b. Ordained ministers serving as interim pastors appointed by the synodical 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 synodical bishop.

7.41.12.

Initial Call to Congregational Service. Because the responsibilities of the office of the ordained ministry are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ordained service, initial service of at least three years shall be in the parish ministry in this church. Exceptions 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.

7.41.13.

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 ordained ministry. 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 ordained ministers for their convenience status. Synodical councils and the Church Council may seek the advice of the Conference of Bishops in specific situations.

7.41.14.

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 an ordained minister 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 ordained ministers 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 deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.

7.41.15.

Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances. When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ordained ministers 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 ordained ministry. 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. Such calls shall be reviewed annually.

7.41.16.

Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.41.17.

Retirement. Ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of ordained ministers shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an ordained minister 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, the bishop of the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the ordained minister to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.41.18.

Disability. Ordained ministers may be designated as disabled and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the roster of ordained ministers shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an ordained minister who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the ordained minister to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.41.19.

Retention of Roster Records. When an ordained minister resigns or is removed from that roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.42.

Each pastor on the roster of ordained ministers of this church shall be related to that synod:

- a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the ordained minister is related;
- b. which issues a letter of call to the ordained minister;
- c. on whose roster the ordained minister was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;

- d. on whose roster the ordained minister, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical 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 ordained minister 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 synodical bishop and received by the Synod Council;**
- f. in which the ordained minister, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the ordained minister is deployed;**
- g. on whose roster the ordained minister was listed when placed on leave from call;**
- h. on whose roster the ordained minister, if designated as disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or**
- i. on whose roster the ordained minister, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.**

7.42.01.

If the service of an ordained minister 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 synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.42.02.

In unusual circumstances, the transfer of an ordained minister who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.42.03.

In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of an ordained minister 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 synodical bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.43.

A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to an ordained minister of this church shall be either co-terminus 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 ordained ministry, 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 ordained ministers.

7.44.

Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ordained ministers who are related to it on the basis of 7.42. of this constitution.

7.44.A05.

Sources of Calls for Ordained Ministers

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 Ordained Ministers," 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 Ordained Ministers

<u>Setting</u>	<u>Calling Body</u>
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	
1.22 Other pastoral arrangements	
1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry	Synod Council ministry
1.4 Congregations beyond ELCA	
1.41 Independent Lutheran congregation	Synod Council
1.42 Overseas independent Lutheran congregation	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
1.43 Other	Synod Council or Church Council
1.5 Interim pastor	Synod Council
1.6 Pastor in a congregation under development	Synod Council
2.0 Synodical ministry	
2.1 Bishop	Synod Assembly
2.2 Assistant to bishop	Synod Council
2.3 Shared staff by two or more synods	One of the participating synods
2.4 Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units	Synod Council
3.0 Regional ministry	
3.1 Staff	Church Council
3.2 Shared synodical-churchwide staff	Church Council
4.0 Churchwide ministry	
4.1 Presiding bishop and secretary	Churchwide Assembly
4.2 Treasurer	Church Council
4.3 Presiding bishop's staff	Church Council
4.4 Office staff	Church Council
4.5 Unit executive director	Church Council
4.6 Section executive	Church Council
4.7 Other churchwide unit staff	Church Council
5.0 Chaplaincy and institutional ministry	
5.1 Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod	Synod Council
5.2 Institution/agency related more to than one synod	Synod Council of one of the synods
5.3 ELCA-related institution/agency	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
5.4 Federal agency/institution	Church Council
5.5 Military	Church Council
6.0 Campus ministry	
6.1 Staff	Synod Council
7.0 Church camp ministry	
7.1 Staff	Synod Council
8.0 Ecumenical ministry	
8.1 Related to a synod	Synod Council

8.2 Related to more than one synod	Synod Council of one of the synods
8.3 National/international organization	Church Council organization
9.0 Inter-Lutheran ministry	
9.1 Related to a synod	Synod Council
9.2 Related to more than one synod	Synod Council
9.3 National/International	Church Council
10.0 Educational ministry	
10.1 ELCA-related seminary chaplain/faculty/administrator	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
10.2 Chaplain/faculty/administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
10.3 ELCA-related college chaplain/faculty/administrator	Synod Council of the synod in which college is located
10.4 Chaplain/faculty/administrator of a college unrelated to ELCA	Synod Council of the synod in which college is located
10.5 ELCA-related school chaplain/faculty/administrator	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
10.6 Chaplain/faculty of a school unrelated to ELCA	Synod Council of the synod in which school is located
10.7 Director/staff of a continuing education center related to churchwide unit	Synod Council in which the main office of center located is upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit
11.0 Missionary ministry	
11.1 Outside United States	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
11.2 Within United States	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
12.0 Other	
12.1 Non-stipendiary service under call	Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops
12.2 Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)	Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops

7.45.

In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no ordained minister of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the ordained minister while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the

person who has given confidential information to the ordained minister or who was observed by the ordained minister, or if the person intends great harm to self or others.

7.46.

The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between an ordained minister 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, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synodical bishop and for 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, 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, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
- 4) the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
- 5) disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
- 6) the dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 7) suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

b. When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop of the synod, the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate—or 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 shall investigate—such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident, the synodical bishop with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the bishop of the synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the synodical bishop together with the committee described in 7.46.b. shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor at a legally called meeting after consultation with the synodical bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority 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 simple majority vote of the voting

members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

e. If, in the course of proceedings described in 7.46.d., the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synodical bishop who may bring charges, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

f. If, following the appointment of the committee described in 7.46.b. or d., it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the synodical bishop may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synodical and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

7.47.

Ordained ministers shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution and bylaws.

7.47.01.

No person who belongs to any organization other than the Church which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be ordained or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so ordained or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins such an organization. Violation of this rule shall make such minister subject to discipline.

7.50. OFFICIAL ROSTERS OF LAYPERSONS

7.51.

This church may establish rosters of laypersons on which the names may be listed of those who qualify for such according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.51.01.

The standards of acceptance and continuance on the lay rosters of this church as defined herein shall be included in the bylaws.

7.51.02.

Under constitutional provision 7.51., those persons previously rostered as commissioned church staff (The American Lutheran Church), deaconesses (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), deaconesses (The American Lutheran Church), deacons (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), lay professional leaders (the Lutheran Church in America), and commissioned teachers (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches) shall be retained as associates in ministry of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church) in the recognized category of

ministry of their previous church body for as long as they are in good standing according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church. Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

7.51.03.

Associates in Ministry. This church shall maintain a lay roster of associates in ministry of those commissioned—according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church—for such service within the life of this church in positions of Word and service on behalf of all of God’s people. Associates in ministry are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world as they serve in congregations and other ministry settings. The roster of associates in ministry, in addition to those listed in bylaw 7.51.02., shall be composed of:

- a. those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
- b. those who are approved, subsequent to September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry in this church according to policies and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- c. Upon receipt and acceptance of a valid, regularly issued letter of call, a newly approved candidate shall be commissioned, according to the proper service orders of this church, as an associate in ministry. Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

7.51.04.

Deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This church shall maintain a lay roster of the deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of those consecrated - according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church - for such service within the life of this church in positions of Word and service on behalf of all of God’s people. Deaconesses are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world. They are to be theologically trained to serve in congregations and other ministry settings.

- a. A newly approved candidate for this roster shall be consecrated, according to the proper service orders of this church, as a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- b. As used herein, references to deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America mean members of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America listed on this church’s official rosters of laypersons as deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

c. Unless otherwise specified, all constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions regarding associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, except for the service order of consecration as a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall apply to those on the lay roster of this church as deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.51.05.

Diaconal Ministers. This church shall establish and maintain a lay roster of diaconal ministers of those consecrated—according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church— for service on behalf of this church in positions of Word and service that exemplify the servant life and that seek to equip and motivate others to live it. Diaconal ministers are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world. Such diaconal ministers shall seek in a great variety of ways to empower, equip, and support all the baptized people of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of God in the world.

a. Upon approval as a candidate for the lay roster of diaconal ministers, and upon receipt and acceptance of a valid, regularly issued letter of call, the candidate shall be consecrated, according to the service orders of this church, as a lay diaconal minister.

b. All constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions regarding associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall apply to those on the lay roster of diaconal ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52.

The standards of acceptance and continuance as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of this church shall be included in the bylaws.

7.52.10.

Standards for the Official Rosters of Laypersons

7.52.11.

Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures:

a. Basic Standards. Persons approved and continued as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church in its governing documents and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- 1) commitment to Christ;
- 2) acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- 3) willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- 4) academic and practical qualifications for the position, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- 5) 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;

- 6) receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- 7) membership in a congregation of this church.

b. Preparation and Approval of an Associate in Ministry. A candidate for approval and commissioning as an associate in ministry of this church shall have:

- 1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;
- 2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved for call by the committee;
- 3) completed the academic and practical preparation for the work for which approved according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 4) been examined and approved by the appropriate synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;
- 5) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

c. Preparation and Approval of a Deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A candidate for approval and consecration as a deaconess of this church shall have:

- 1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;
- 2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved by the synodical candidacy committee for call;
- 3) completed the academic and practical preparation for the work for which approved according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 4) been examined and approved by the synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;
- 5) completed the required formation component, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, in the preparation program for service as a deaconess of this church;
- 6) been recommended for call by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned in accordance with procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- 7) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

d. Preparation and Approval of a Diaconal Minister. A candidate for approval and consecration as a diaconal minister of this church shall have:

- 1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;

- 2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved by the synodical candidacy committee for call;
- 3) demonstrated competence in at least one area of specialization or expertise according to guidelines established by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 4) completed a first theological degree from an accredited theological school in North America;
- 5) completed approved work in Lutheran studies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 6) completed the required formation component in the preparation program for Lutheran diaconal ministry as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 7) completed an approved internship or practical preparation as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;
- 8) been examined and approved by the appropriate synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adoption by the Church Council;
- 9) been recommended for call by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned in accordance with procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- 10) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.52.12.

Approval under Other Circumstances. A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures, which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit.

7.52.13.

Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as an associate in ministry, whether having previously served in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or a diaconal minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be endorsed by the pastor and council of the congregation of this church of which such a person is a member, and interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the synodical candidacy committee under criteria 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 in this church.

- a. Any person removed from a lay roster that existed on December 31, 1987, as cited herein, who seeks to return to active lay roster status must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the official rosters of laypersons, as identified in 7.51.03.b. This same requirement shall

apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.

b. A person on the roster of a previous church body or a person on the roster of associates in ministry of this church, who was so certified during the period between January 1, 1988, and September 1, 1993, shall relinquish such a roster category upon being received and accepted on another roster of this church.

7.52.14.

Maintenance of Lay Rosters. Each synod shall maintain a lay roster or rosters containing the names of those related to the synod as members of its congregations who have been approved as associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers - according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church - for inclusion on such a roster or rosters.

a. To promote proportionate representation of the rostered faculty and administration in each synod related directly to a seminary of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister, if a seminary teacher or administrator, shall be assigned to the roster of a synod by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of the affected synod.

b. For the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister, serving under call in the churchwide organization, may be assigned to a synod, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.52.15.

The secretary of this church shall maintain the lay rosters of associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers on which shall be listed the names of those who qualify according to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

7.52.20.

Service as Rostered Laypersons

7.52.21.

Service under Call. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, synod, or the churchwide organization.

a. A call may be extended either for indefinite or stated periods of time by the appropriate calling body 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.

b. Regular, valid calls in this church shall be in accord with criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

c. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

7.52.22.

On Leave from Call. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that call without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which 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 synodical bishop, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers 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 synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister engaged in graduate study appropriate for service in this church may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church for a maximum of six years.

c. Family Leave: An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a rostered layperson who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the rostered layperson or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers 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.

7.52.23.

Issuance and Termination of the Call of an Associate in Ministry, Deaconess, or Diaconal Minister.

a. A letter of call to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church 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. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, the synodical bishop, following appropriate consultation, will recommend a course of action to the pastor, lay rostered person, and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If any party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

b. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church shall be either co-terminus 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 associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

c. 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 associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers.

7.52.24.

Retirement. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the official rosters of laypersons shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

b. If an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister 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, the bishop of the synod in which the

associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52.25.

Disability. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers may be designated as disabled, and continue to be listed on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official rosters of laypersons shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

b. If an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52.26.

Retention of Roster Records. When an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.52.27.

Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When 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 an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister 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 deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.

7.52.A05.

Sources of Calls for Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers

a. *The principles governing sources of calls for ordained ministers shall, as appropriate, also govern sources of letters of call for associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

b. *Table of Sources of Call for Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers*

<u>Setting</u>	<u>Calling Body</u>
1.0 Congregational ministry	
1.1 Single congregation	<i>Congregation meeting</i>
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	<i>Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal</i>
1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.4 Other congregations	
1.41 Independent Lutheran	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.42 Other	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.0 Synodical ministry	<i>Synod Council</i>
3.0 Regional ministry	<i>Church Council</i>
4.0 Churchwide ministry	
4.1 Officer's staff	<i>Church Council</i>
4.2 Unit executive director	<i>Church Council</i>
4.3 Section executive	<i>Church Council</i>
4.4 Other churchwide unit staff	<i>Church Council</i>
5.0 Social ministry institutions	
5.1 Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
5.2 Institution/agency related to more than one synod	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
5.3 ELCA-related institution/agency	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
5.4 Other	<i>Church Council</i>
6.0 Campus ministry	
6.1 Staff	<i>Synod Council</i>
7.0 Church camp ministry	
7.1 Staff	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.0 Ecumenical ministry	
8.1 Related to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.2 Related to more than synod	<i>Synod Council of one the synods</i>
8.3 National/international organization	<i>Church Council</i>
9.0 Inter-Lutheran ministry	
9.1 Related to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
9.2 Related to more than one synod	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
9.3 National/international organization	<i>Church Council</i>
10.0 Educational ministry	

10.1 ELCA-related seminary	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.2 Seminary unrelated to ELCA	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.3 ELCA-related college	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.4 College unrelated to ELCA	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.5 ELCA-related school	<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 School unrelated to ELCA	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which school is located</i>
10.7 Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which the main office of center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.0 Missionary ministry	
11.1 Outside United States	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.2 Within United States	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
12.0 Other	
12.1 Non-stipendiary service under call	<i>Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops</i>
12.2 Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not Conference otherwise specified)	<i>Synod Council or Church council upon recommendation by the of Bishops</i>

7.53.

Persons on the lay rosters of this church as defined herein shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

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 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 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 appropriate churchwide unit, 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 reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.