

**Reviewing On Leave From Call Removal Process**

- Whereas people in the United States increasingly consider themselves not religious, spiritual not religious, atheist, agnostic, or another variation of unchurched or dechurched and reaching them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ requires adjusting expectations and actions.
- Whereas the nature of worship and church community is changing, requiring creativity, innovation, and flexibility
- Whereas congregations are exploring alternatives to one or more full-time clergy on staff (ie. part-time ministry, multi-point parishes, contracts)
- Whereas multi vocational ministry and unpaid ministry are increasingly encouraged for consideration by synod leadership and seminaries
- Whereas individuals, congregations, synods, and the ELCA as a whole invest a great deal of time, money, and energy into training rostered ministers
- Whereas ELCA Churchwide and several ELCA synods have been expressing concerns about a clergy shortage for 20+ years
- Whereas many areas experience a shortage of interim/transition/bridge ministers and supply preachers.
- Whereas synods and synod bishops handle interim/transition clergy calls, specialized ministry calls, calls for deacons, and on-leave-from call status inconsistently
- Whereas some rostered ministers experience toxic and/or abusive calls
- Whereas deacons in general and BIPOC, LGBTQIA+2S, disabled, and/or female rostered ministers disproportionately experience extended time in On Leave From Call status
- Whereas removal from the roster due to exceeding on-leave from call status, missing deadlines, or unclear communication is not uncommon, even when rostered leaders actively maintain a Rostered Minister Profile in the ELCA mobility system and/or are serving as an interim/transition/bridge or other minister..
- Whereas those removed from the roster have no way to effectively challenge their removal
- Resolved that the South Dakota Synod memorializes the churchwide council and the council of bishops to suspend removal from the roster due to anything other than formal disciplinary reasons (ie. no removal for exceeding maximum time periods for on-leave from call status, serving in ministry positions that don't offer a formal letter of call, or missing communication deadlines). and
- Be it further resolved that the South Dakota Synod memorializes the churchwide council and council of bishops to create a task force to establish national guidelines for handling interim/transition/bridge calls, specialized ministry calls, other non-parish based or innovative calls (with increased attention to calls for are deacons), on-leave from call status, removal from call protocols, removal from roster protocols, and communication protocols. and
- Be it further resolved that said committee establishes a process for the clergy to challenge their removal from call and/or roster outside of the synod involved.

