

Subject: Memorial for the Review of the Roster Manual
Source: Resolutions Committee

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 those removed from the roster have no way to effectively challenge their removal

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..

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to review the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

RESOLVED, that the review process to include, but not limited to: the time limits given for On-leave-from-Call, steps for requesting a roster status, and a process by which an action or lack of recommendation from a bishop may be appealed, including the possibility of an appeal in a synod other than the synod from which they were removed from the roster.

Resolution #3b
Recommendation: Do Pass as Amended
Action Taken:

RESOLVED, that the review considers questions of specialized ministry such as interim/transition ministry, campus ministry, outdoor ministry, college and seminary professors, chaplains, innovative ministry, and others where practices are not uniform across the ELCA.

RESOLVED, that the review process include a diverse group representing both the roster of word and sacrament and the roster of word and service, those in specialized ministry, and on-leave-from-call for family, study, disability, and between calls.

RESOLVED, that 2022 Churchwide Assembly urge bishops and synod councils to use sparingly any action by which a minister is removed from the roster for non-disciplinary reasons, unless the minister requests removal, until this review is complete.

RESOLVED, that the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by the Fall 2024 meeting of the Church Council.