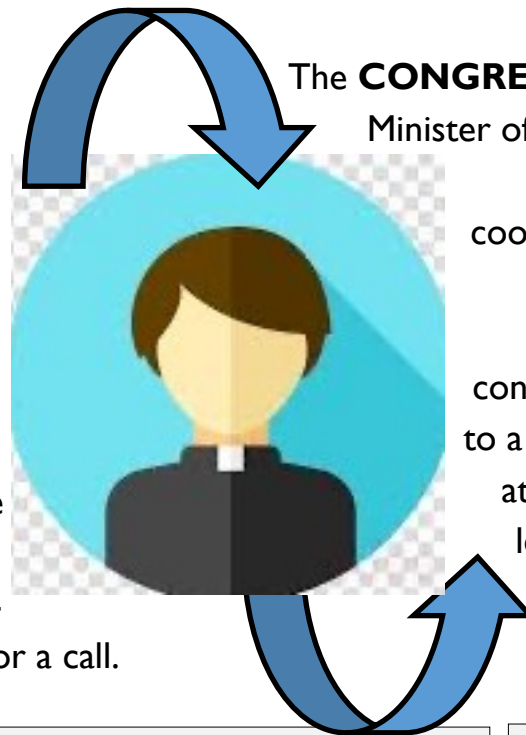


Understanding the role of a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The **CHURCH** (the whole ELCA) prepares, examines, and approves a person for ministry through years of work through congregations, seminaries, and Synod Candidacy Committees. This process really begins in baptism, but more identifiably can take four or more years of seminary, internship and call process to be approved for a call.



The **CONGREGATION** calls the ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament. The process begins through coordination with the Bishop of the synod and the “Call Committee” of the congregation. A pastor is called to a congregation upon receiving at least two-thirds vote of a legally called congregation meeting.

The **ORDINATION** is the worship liturgy in which the office of ministry is conferred to the candidate.

at Ordination, the candidate vows to:

- Assume the office and trust that the church’s call is God’s call
- Preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and the creeds and confessions
- Be diligent in the study of the holy scriptures
- Be faithful in the use of the means of grace
- Pray for God’s people
- Nourish them with the word and sacraments,
- Lead them by their own example in faithful service and holy living
- Give faithful witness in the world that God’s love may be known

The Bishop, then charges the ordinand to:

- care for God’s people
- bear their burdens
- do not betray their confidence
- discipline themselves in life and teaching to preserve the truth, giving no occasion for false security or illusory hope
- witness faithfully in word and deed to all people.
- give and receive comfort as they serve within the church.
- and be of good courage, for God has called them

The **INSTALLATION** is the worship liturgy in which the ordained minister takes their office in the congregation. Some of the vows echo the vows of ordination.

The Minister vows to:

- baptize, teach, and forgive sins
- proclaim the Good News
- preside at the Lord’s Table

The Congregation vows to:

- Receive their new pastor as a messenger of Jesus Christ, sent to serve all people with the gospel of hope and salvation
- Regard them as a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God
- Pray for them
- Help and honor them for the work’s sake
- Strive to live together in peace and unity in Christ

PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES of the Minister of Word and Sacrament (Chapter 9 of the Congregation Constitution)

- 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 distribution of its communications and publications
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.

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 this 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 ELCA churchwide organization and of the synod of the congregation

Also:

- shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
- shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod;
- shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call
- shall submit a report of their ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- Serve as a *ex officio* member of Congregation Council, committees and ministry teams
- And other duties as assigned in the Letter of Call extended to the pastor by the Congregation



The ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA is customarily addressed in formal written correspondence as The Rev. Jane Doe, and more conversationally as Pastor Jane or Pastor Doe.



Mutual Accountability

The specific duties, compensation and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor are specified in the “Letter of Call” issued from the congregation, negotiated by the Council and attested to by the Bishop.

The Mutual Ministry Committee (C13.04) is responsible for giving support to the pastor to the end that all will support one another in vocation and will be able to perform their duties under pleasant circumstances.

The Congregation Council (C12.04.d) shall maintain supportive relationship with the rostered minister(s) (and staff) and help them annually evaluate the fulfillment of their calling.

The call of a congregation to a pastor shall constitute a continuing and mutual relationship and commitment. The termination of a call is described in C9.05 of the Constitution.

The Office of the Bishop of the Synod requires regular professional training of rostered ministers in ethics and safe boundaries. In addition to the Congregation Constitution, the pastor is also bound to follow the Synod and Church policies. These documents are readily available on the Synod or ELCA website.

If an individual believes there has been a professional or ethical boundary indiscretion or violation, involving a rostered minister (or employee of the congregation)—please report to the Executive Council Committee, who will seek assistance from the Office of the Bishop.