

# Policies of the Commission on Deacon Qualifications



**“People of Hope ... Vigorously Making Known the Love of Christ”**

Michigan District, LCMS

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## Introduction

*“A Deacon must have a thorough grounding in Christian Doctrine and an in-depth understanding of the Lutheran Church. To serve as a Deacon a man must be recognized as being a spiritual person whom his congregation implicitly trusts.”*

C. William Hoesman, District President, MI Dist. LC-MS (May 2004)

## Biblical foundation for Deacon Ministry

- **Acts 6:1–7 (ESV)**

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. <sup>4</sup> But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” <sup>5</sup> And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. <sup>6</sup> These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup> And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

- **1 Timothy 3:1–13 (ESV)**

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. <sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

<sup>8</sup> Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. <sup>11</sup> Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. <sup>12</sup> Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. <sup>13</sup> For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

- **1 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

- **Romans 12:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

- **1 Peter 4:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

## **Luther on the role and value of Deacons from his Lectures on I Timothy:**

- “Deacons were men who also preached occasionally. We read in Acts 6:1-6 that they chose seven men in the church to be in charge of providing for the poor and the widows. Those deacons also at times preached, as in the case of Stephen, and they were admitted to other duties of the church, although their primary responsibility was to care for the poor and the widows. This custom already long ago went out of use. In the papal church the subdeacon is the one who reads the Gospel. The distribution of aid and care of the poor are relegated to hospices... There ought to be deacons of the church - men who should serve the bishop and at his recommendation to rule the church in external matters. “(Luther Works, Volume 28, CPH 1973, p.295ff).

## Ecclesiastical foundation for Deacon Ministry in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

- (See Appendices “A” - “E”, attached including: 3-05B 1989 Convention, 13-02A 2016 Convention)

## Nomenclature

DEACON CANDIDATE - A man who has successfully completed all training requirements and is in good standing with the CDQ, and is eligible to serve, but does not presently hold a position in a congregation with a Supervising Pastor.

SUPERVISING PASTOR - The pastor of the congregation where the Deacon is serving as an intern or as a Deacon. He holds the Pastoral Office under which the Deacon serves. In unique circumstances, the supervising Pastor may be the Pastor of a near-by LC-MS congregation or the Circuit Visitor.

SPONSORING CONGREGATION - The congregation which asks the Deacon to serve as an intern or as a Deacon.

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In response to LC-MS Resolution 13-02A (2016), the following document describes the practice of various ministries roles within the Michigan District, LC-MS:

### Distinctions Regarding the Office of the Holy Ministry in Congregations of the Michigan District of the LCMS:

*General Pastors* (M.Div., A.R., EIIT, CHS, CMC)

*Specific Ministry Pastors* (SMP)

&

*General Certificate Pastors* (GCP)

*Credentialed Lay Deacons* (CLD)

&

*Licensed Lay Deacons* (LLD)

While we seek to encourage men to demonstrate initiative and take action to prepare themselves for positions of servant-leadership in ministry among God's people, some confusion has arisen in regard to placement in service and the specific "Call" to serve in a congregation of the LCMS.

**General Pastor:** This is the "historically normal" route toward ordination in our Church. These are men who have, by the work of the Holy Spirit through the study

of God's Word, conversations with fellow believers, life circumstances, an "internal calling", or any combination of these means, presented themselves to the larger Church by way of one of our seminaries<sup>1</sup> to be trained for the Pastoral Office. These may be men who have recognized this "internal calling" later in as a second career and used the seminaries' **Alternate Route (AR)** program. They may also qualify for the **Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT)** or the **Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS)** or the **Cross-Cultural Ministry Center (CMC)**. They have in this manner "**self-selected**" to serve in this Office. After their educational preparation, they may or may not be found "adequate for the task". We trust our seminary faculties to discern their readiness. These men are then presented for "placement" with a "Calling congregation". **They are recognized by the individual congregations/ministries through the eye of the larger Church.** If no congregation "Calls" (AC XIV) them to be their pastor, they simply have a great theological education, **but THEY ARE NOT pastors. Note:** Even a man who has been "ordained" is not a "pastor" unless he has been "Called" to serve as such.

**Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP):** This is a more recent route to ordination. These are men who, in a very real sense, have a "Call" from a congregation (or ministry) before they receive their training. They have **not "Self-selected"** but have been raised up by the local fellowship of believers who have asked him to serve as their pastor and therefore request that he take whatever actions are required to be trained for this noble task. **These men are then recognized by the larger Church through the eyes of the individual congregation as Pastors.** (AC XIV) Therefore, these men are not eligible for a "Call" to serve elsewhere in the larger Church because they have been raised up specifically by the individual congregation/ministry. However, exceptions can be made when the needs of ministry demand it and in cooperation and permission of the District President where the Pastor is serving; and, **until they have completed additional coursework toward "certification" as a General Pastor, remain under supervision of a General Pastor.**

**General Certificate Pastor:** Specific Ministry Pastors who have successfully complete additional seminary studies and upon "certification" may be "Called" and serve elsewhere as a "General Pastor".

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<sup>1</sup> Some may qualify for LCMS Roster by M.Div. Colloquy from another denomination.



**Credentialed Lay Deacons:** This is a “new” category of servant leader since Res.13-02A (2016) “To Regularize the Status of Licensed Lay Deacons” was passed by Synod in convention. Similar to the SMP, these men are raised up as respected leaders among their fellowship of believers and are therefore asked to serve in some specific servant-leadership role(s) of ministry which may or may not be uniquely a “pastoral” role. It is recognized that these men also need some education and training for the task. Since Synod in convention passed Res. 3-05B in 1989, “To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report”, and affirming subsequent affirming resolution by Synod in Convention 2004 Res. 5-09 “To Affirm District Programs That Equip Laity for Ministry”, Michigan District-LCMS has provided and strengthened through the work of the Commission on Deacon Qualifications (serving under the Office of the District President) a Michigan District School of Deacon Training. (AKA: Michigan School of Missional Formation) Other Districts of the LCMS have had or do have similar training programs for Laity. (The 2016 Res. 13-02A also affirmed and encouraged such District lay training programs.) These men are **“Credentialed”**, meaning they are recognized as having successfully completed the MI District Training and have been asked to serve as a Credentialed Deacon by their local congregation and have the oversight of their immediate Supervising (general) pastor; and may serve in a variety of educational, evangelistic, community service, and pastoral care/visitation roles to assist their pastor **assuming they are so requested (Called) by the congregation.** **Again, these are men who are recognized by the Larger Church through the eyes of the individual congregation/ministry and therefore their service is not generally “transferable” to another fellowship of believers.**

**Licensed Lay Deacon:** Since 2019, this should be a rare category among us in the LCMS, although not without legitimacy. Synod Resolution 13-02A (2016) also affirmed that **“emergency knows no rule”**. Therefore, **ONLY in exceptional circumstances or in emergency, when no LCMS ordained Pastor is available and God’s people may not have access to the spiritual nourishment of the Word and Sacraments, and if the congregation requests (Calls) a Credentialed Deacon to serve** in the specific aspects of the Pastoral Office or Public Ministry (**Example:** Regular Sunday morning public worship) of **Word and Sacrament (Pastor)** these men may be **“Licensed”** for such by the District President. (And then, only with the request for an exception being granted by the Council of Presidents, **(representing**

**the Larger Church)** may a Deacon serve in this manner.) These men, too, remain under the supervision of a General Pastor. Should the needs (Call) of the congregation require it, **(The “exception” is not the rule.)** these men will be directed to enter into one of the several routes to ordination through one of our LCMS Seminaries. (Usually **Specific Ministry Pastor, SMP**)

**April 2025**

**Rev. Dr. Robert E. Kasper**

**Director of Leadership Development**

**MI District-LCMS**

## POLICY 1: CDQ MEMBERSHIP AND ESTABLISHMENT

### **Establishment of CDQ**

- Membership is appointed by the District President and affirmed by the Board of Directors of Michigan District.
- The Commission shall consist of at least 5 members and be represented by at least one Lay person, one Ordained, one Commissioned, one Deacon, and one faculty member.
- The Commission will elect its chairman annually.
- There is no term limit, but the Board of Directors may remove a member or accept a resignation upon the recommendation of the District President.
- The District President's representative and other faculty may serve as ex officio members.

## POLICY 2: FINANCES

### Concerning finances of the Michigan School of Missional Formation (MSMF) Program in the Michigan District

- Funds generated by tuition will be held by the Michigan District but shall be accounted for separate from the “Deacon” portion of the District’s Budget. Each year ten percent **(of the year-end balance)** will be given to the Michigan District.
- Payment of instructors’ fees (salaries, travel, and materials) and other related costs required to provide the actual seminars shall be paid, using the funds generated by tuition. Such costs may not exceed actual income from tuition in any fiscal year without CDQ approval. (February 1-January 31)
- Expenses incurred by the Commission on Deacon Qualifications (CDQ), such as meeting costs, travel, Dean of Instruction position, initial funding for the Deacon Continuing Education Conference, Supervising Pastors’ Conference, etc., shall be the responsibility of the Michigan District in its annual budget.
- The CDQ Treasurer and Registrar shall coordinate with the V.P. of Finance of the Michigan District regarding all matters of accounting for income and expenses of the MSMF.

## POLICY 3: QUALIFICATION OF THE DEACON

### Spiritual Qualifications

The spiritual qualifications of a deacon can be found in Scripture such as Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9.

### Academic qualifications

- At least a High School Diploma or GED (a Bachelor's degree is recommended).
- Successful completion of the course requirements established by the CDQ.

### Personal Qualifications

- Demonstrates ability and aptitude as a self-motivated adult learner with a teachable spirit.
- Demonstrates ability and aptitude as a collaborative leader in a ministry team.
- Demonstrates a teachable spirit.
- Demonstrates self-discipline to follow through on assignments and tasks.
- Demonstrates ability and willingness to serve under the direction of a Supervising Pastor.

### Training of Deacons in the Michigan District, LC-MS

- Each Seminar must have at least 8 (eight) participants registered (students or auditors) to be offered.
- The Deacon Training consists of 14 seminars (3 sessions each\*). These are:
  - Doctrine I (The Christian Faith)
  - Doctrine II (The Christian Life)
  - Old Testament Survey
  - New Testament Survey
  - Christian Care-giving
  - Lutheran Lay Leadership
  - Biblical Greek I and II (Equipping to use multiple resources in translation)
  - Lutheran Worship
  - Homiletics (Preaching)
  - Church History (4 sessions\*)

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- Office of the Ministry
- Outreach
- Teaching the Faith (Adult Education)

## POLICY 4: COMPENSATION

Please see Appendix I.

## POLICY 5: INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- All Deacon Training seminars will be taught by Ordained or Commissioned Ministers, and Credentialed Deacons, of the LC-MS. Instructors must have an M.A., terminal degree preferred.
- All seminar instructors serve under the authority of, and at the direction of, the CDQ and the Dean of Instruction.



## POLICY 6: CLASS ATTENDANCE (Classic Plus)

- Deacon trainees and Interns may not miss the first session of any seminar. Absence from the first session will disqualify the individual from that seminar.
- A trainee or intern who is absent from any subsequent session of a seminar will be required to make up that session when that seminar is next offered.
- Distance or correspondence learning experiences for course make up purposes will be reviewed individually. (Examples would include medical and family emergencies)
- In order to successfully complete a seminar, all seminar requirements and assignments must be submitted to the instructor within 30 days of the final session. Deadline extensions may be granted at the instructor's discretion.
- In general, students in the MSMF Program will not be able to have seminars waived.
- Any request for waivers must be submitted in writing with transcripts and be approved by the Dean of Instruction.

## POLICY 7: TUITION & FEES

Please see Appendix J.

## POLICY 8: SCHOLARSHIPS

### SCHOLARSHIP POLICY – CLASSIC PLUS

#### **Assumptions for Policy:**

- The student is an active member of a MI District LCMS congregation.
- The student has been asked by his/her congregation (Sponsoring Congregation) and/or pastor (Supervising Pastor) to engage in training through the MI School of Missional Formation. Such a request is documented by letter over the signature of the pastor and/or elected congregation leader.
- The student is also receiving some financial support from the “sponsoring congregation”.
- The student has documented significant financial need.
- The responsibility for timely tuition payments (\$350.00 per course, presently) for each course of his/her enrollment is solely that of the student.

#### **Policy statement:**

**1.1** The Commission on Deacon Qualification (CDQ) of the MI District LCMS, upon review of the **Request for Student Aid**, shall provide scholarship monies for any needy student desiring to be trained through the MI School of Missional Formation through its Michigan District developed Classic Plus Program up to \$175.00 per course with a total scholarship not to exceed \$2,450.00 per student.

**1.2** Such monies will be in the form of “matching funds” in partnership is the Sponsoring congregation (SC) and will be remitted to the SC on a semi-annual basis while the student is enrolled (dollar for dollar, up to \$175.00 per course, not to exceed a total of \$2,450.00 per student over the course of his/her enrollment in the program) The SC shall then transfer the scholarship on to the student.

**1.3** In the event that the student discontinues his/her studies, the SC shall retain any unused scholarship monies for up to six months. If the student re-enrolls within the six-month term, the SC shall resume scholarship support from retained funds.

**1.4** If the student does not re-enroll within six months, the SC shall return any unused scholarship monies to the MI District LCMS for replacement into the CDQ Scholarship fund.

**1.5** The Secretary/Treasurer of the CDQ shall be tasked with developing and maintaining a method of tracking and reporting student aid scholarships and, in cooperation with the Business Office of the MI District LCMS, develop effective and efficient means of directing monies to the respective SC in a timely manner.

**1.6** The CDQ shall seek to continuously replenish the scholarship fund through appropriate avenues such as: Alumni solicitation, special offerings at the annual Deacon/MAP Conference, etc.

## SCHOLARSHIP POLICY – KAIROS

### **Assumptions for Policy:**

- The student is an active member of a MI District LCMS congregation.
- The student has been asked by his/her congregation (Sponsoring Congregation) and/or pastor (Supervising Pastor) to engage in training through the MI School of Missional Formation. Such a request is documented by letter over the signature of the pastor and/or elected congregation leader.
- The student is also receiving some financial support from the “sponsoring congregation”.
- The student has documented significant financial need.
- The responsibility for timely tuition payments (\$300.00 per month, presently) for the duration of his/her enrollment is solely that of the student.

### **Policy statement:**

**1.1** The Commission on Deacon Qualification (CDQ) of the MI District LCMS, upon review of the **Request for Student Aid**, shall provide scholarship monies for any needy student desiring to be trained through the MI School of Missional Formation through its partnership with Kairos University on the KAIROS Project platform up to \$150.00 per month with a total scholarship not to exceed \$1,800.00 per student.

**1.2** Such monies will be in the form of “matching funds” in partnership is the Sponsoring congregation (SC) and will be remitted to the SC on a semi-annual basis while the student is enrolled (dollar for dollar, up to \$150.00 per month, not to exceed a total of \$1,800.00 per student over the course of his/her enrollment in the program) The SC shall then transfer the scholarship on to the student.

**1.3** In the event that the student discontinues his/her studies, the SC shall retain any unused scholarship monies for up to six months. If the student re-enrolls within the six-month term, the SC shall resume scholarship support from retained funds.

**1.4** If the student does not re-enroll within six months, the SC shall return any unused scholarship monies to the MI District LCMS for replacement into the CDQ Scholarship fund.

**1.5** The Secretary/Treasurer of the CDQ shall be tasked with developing and maintaining a method of tracking and reporting student aid scholarships and, in cooperation with the Business Office of the MI District LCMS, develop effective and efficient means of directing monies to the respective SC in a timely manner.

**1.6** The CDQ shall seek to continuously replenish the scholarship fund through appropriate avenues such as: Alumni solicitation, special offerings at the annual Deacon/MAP Conference, etc.

## POLICY 9: COURSE GRADING

**Deacon Candidates** will receive a letter grade at the end of the seminar, which will be shared with the Michigan District's Commission on Deacon Qualifications (CDQ). That grade will be based on (1) attending all required meetings, unless circumstances require partial absence, and with the instructor's permission, (2) meaningful participation in and substantive contribution to class discussions, and (3) completing all assignments.

The seminar will be graded on an "A to failure" basis. A student will not be counted as having passed the seminar until such time as all homework is finished, which earns a "B". To earn an "A", an extra assignment needs to be completed which will need to be approved by the instructor.

The student has one month after the last session of the class to complete the homework and turn it in to the instructor to receive a passing grade, unless circumstances require partial absence, and with the instructor's permission. After that time, the student will have an "incomplete" for the course and will need to retake the class when offered the next time to receive a passing grade.

## POLICY 10: SEMINAR AUDITING

- Any person who wishes to audit a seminar in part or in total may do so and will not be required to complete class assignments and will not receive a certificate of completion.
- The individual wishing to audit a seminar is required to pay an “Auditing fee.”
- Any person, at the invitation of a trainee or instructor may “sit in” on one session at no charge.
- Student’s spouse may sit in a session for no charge if the person is not preparing for a ministry position in the LCMS.

## POLICY 11: RECOGNITION OF COMPLETION

### **Credentialing of Deacon and Ministry Assistants Candidates**

- **Deacon “Credentialing”** recognizes the man who has successfully completed all 14 seminars in Classic Plus or Kairos - completion of program and valid transcript for degree is therefore eligible for consideration of credentialing.
- **Ministry Assistant Program**
  - A Ministry Assistant candidate completing the core courses or seminars and optional courses will receive appropriate Michigan District recognition.
  - Such recognition will require successful compliance with everything required for a Credentialed Deacon. (A Ministry Description for a Ministry Assistant.)
- Each candidate will submit to a background check and an interview with the Commission on Deacon Qualification.
- Additional items required for Credentialing of a Deacon Candidate (forms available upon request from the Michigan District):
  - Signed “Request to be Served by a Lay Deacon” from the congregation
  - “Diploma of Vocation” for the Supervising Pastor
  - A completed “Ministry Description” for the Deacon
  - A recent “Deacon Evaluation” signed by both the Supervising Pastor and the Deacon Candidate.
  - “Deacon Information Form”
- After Credentialing, and upon the recommendation of the CDQ, the District President may grant a one-year, Certificate of Credentialing.



## POLICY 12: RENEWAL OF CREDENTIALING

- **Concerning renewal:**
  - Deacons must be credentialed annually by the District President.
  - Deacons must document completion of continuing education and be interviewed by a member of the CDQ annually for continued credentialing.
  - The District President's representative, on behalf of the CDQ will review the annual report on the Deacon from the Supervising Pastor as part of the renewal process.
  - To be eligible for credentialed renewal, a Deacon must attend the annual Deacons' Conference. (If unable to attend the annual conference, the Deacon must provide evidence of a completion certificate of one Continuing Education Unit or 10 contact hours (Classroom experience or seminar(s)).
  - The CDQ will recommend to the District President for recredentialing only those Deacons who have completed the above requirements.
  - **All credentials terminate annually on December 31**, regardless of the anniversary of credentialing
- **Ministry Assistant Program**
  - A Ministry Assistant candidate completing the core courses or seminars and optional courses will receive appropriate Michigan District recognition.
  - Such recognition will require successful compliance with everything required for a Credentialed Deacon.
- All requirements for credentialing must be completed annually by **October 1 each year** for recommendation by the CDQ to the District President.
- Additional items required for Credentialing of a Deacon Candidate (forms available upon request from the Michigan District):
  - Signed "Request to be Served by a Lay Deacon" from the congregation
  - "Diploma of Vocation" for the Supervising Pastor
  - A completed "Ministry Description" for the Deacon
  - A recent "Deacon Evaluation" signed by both the Supervising Pastor and the Deacon Candidate.
  - "Deacon Information Form"

## POLICY 13: DEACON LICENSING

Should a congregation need the Credentialed Deacon to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry because of a prolonged pastoral vacancy (emergency) and the people of God would be without an ordained pastor to serve them in public worship, the congregation must submit a request for an "Exception be served by a Licensed Deacon" to the District President. Upon approval by the DP and plurality of the COP as per Res. 13-02A 2016, the deacon may serve up to one year as a Licensed Lay Deacon (LLD), during which time, the arrangements will be made for the LLD to seek ordination through one of the several routes at our LCMS seminaries. For service beyond one year the DP will determine the means of service to the congregation moving forward.

(See "Nomenclature" section above under the section "Licensed Deacon".)

## Concerning amendments to these policies:

- Any additional policies deemed necessary by the Commission on Deacon Qualification (CDQ) of the Michigan District, LC-MS, must reflect the intent and be in accord with the Handbook of the Synod and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Michigan District.
- The above policies and any subsequent additions or amendments must be ratified by the Board of Directors of the Michigan District, LC-MS.

## APPENDIX A: Resolution 3-05B, 1989 Convention

*[The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been working on a refinement of its lay ministry practices for many years. The most definitive action describing acceptable lay-led ministry was developed at the Wichita Convention of the LCMS in 1989.]*

### **RES. 3-05B: TO ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS OF LAY WORKER STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT**

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been and continues to be blessed with many dedicated full-time church workers; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention in 1983 adopted a three-category classification of our full-time workers: Minister of Religion—Ordained; Minister of Religion—Commissioned; and Certified Professional Church Worker, Lay (1983 Res. 5-09A); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions clearly teach that there is only one divinely instituted office in the church; that is, the Office of the Public Ministry, commonly referred to as pastor (AC V, XIV); and

WHEREAS, “Except in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies” (“The Ministry,” a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1981, p. 35) the distinctive functions of the pastoral office are to be carried out only by those who have received a regular call (AC XIV); and

WHEREAS, Great care must be exercised in carrying out the Great Commission so that people not be deprived of Word and Sacrament when no ordained pastor is available; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod provide for the licensing of certain men “for special Word and Sacrament ministry, under the supervision of ordained pastors” (Bylaw 6.97 f); and

WHEREAS, The Synod in its history has met critical needs in its ministries by employing extraordinary means, for example, the *Nothilfern* (“emergency helpers”—pastors for special circumstances) in its early history; and

WHEREAS, The experience of some of our partner churches (e.g., The Lutheran Church of Nigeria and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana) includes the use of specially selected, trained, and supervised laymen to assist in Word and Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 135 “lay ministers” are presently serving in the Synod in an ongoing Word and Sacrament ministry without the benefit of synodical guidelines for their service; and

WHEREAS, Concerns have been raised that the uniqueness of the divinely instituted pastoral office be preserved; and

WHEREAS, The Lay Worker Study Committee, appointed by the President of the Synod, undertook a careful study of the whole matter of recognized lay ministry in the Synod, including (1) the question of pastoral services, functions, and responsibilities being carried out by men who have not completed a seminary program

and who are not ordained; (2) the questions of nomenclature, preparation, deployment, and supervision of the present Category III (Certified Professional Church Workers, Lay) workers, and (3) the review and identification of various and perhaps new ways of involving lay people in specific congregational ministries, and especially in the planting of new missions; and

WHEREAS, The Lay Worker Study Committee has completed its task and has submitted its report to this convention; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the Synod and an effective means of promoting the Gospel that the ministry of lay people be regarded as a way to multiply, enhance, and extend the ministry of the church; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Lay Worker Study Committee be thanked for its dedicated service in carrying out its responsibilities; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the entire report be commended to the members of the Synod and others who would be served by its review and consideration; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the recommendations of the Lay Worker Study Committee (Section VII of its report), as amended, be adopted as follows:

## **VII. Recommendations**

### **A. Forms of Lay Ministry**

The focus for the ministry of the church, and therefore, lay ministry, is in the world. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” and “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself . . . and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation” (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:1□20). All Christians are called to carry out ministry in the broad sense, and this ministry is accomplished by and through Christians in everyday life. In many respects, lay people are on the front line of ministry. The individual is called to serve as part of the universal priesthood of believers. It is the task of the church to equip Christians for their ministry or service as Christians. Viewed in this way, clergy assist lay persons in helping them to fulfill their Christian vocation.

Lay persons also assist in the congregation’s life by assisting in equipping each other for Christian vocations as they serve on boards, committees, as officers, elders, and in all facets of parish life. Such service is voluntary and is based on mutual accountability between pastor and people. Lay persons are vital to the church, they are its lifeblood, and without them the church does not exist.

Because training and service of lay persons are not always uniform, it seems both wise and necessary to identify those qualities and preparation which persons who serve in positions of recognized leadership should possess.

Based upon its conclusions, the Lay Worker Study Committee recommends the following:

1. That the present Certified Professional Church Workers, Lay programs approved by the Board for Higher Education Services be continued.
2. That districts and other entities be assisted by the Synod through the Board for Parish Services in developing training programs for lay workers which are for a specific context and are locally

available.

3. 3. That the training of lay workers by districts and other entities for service within the district be encouraged and that minimum standards, including personal qualities, skills, theological preparation, and academic training appropriate to the field of service for which the prospective worker is being prepared be established by the district.
4. 4. That information and resources regarding the training of lay workers be gathered, developed, and disseminated by the Board for Parish Services reflecting current use, supervision, trends, and issues.
5. 5. That conferences for leaders in districts, circuits, and other groupings of congregations training lay workers be sponsored by the Board for Parish Services.

## **B. Nomenclature**

In order to aid in removing the confusion with regard to the nomenclature which exists at the present time, the committee recommends the following:

1. That the category Certified Professional Church Workers, Lay be changed to “Certified Church Workers, Lay.”
2. That the present titles of positions in this category be retained.
3. That locally trained workers be referred to as lay workers and that those using these services be encouraged to use titles other than those used by synodically certified church workers.
4. That the title *deacon* be established by which a layman would be addressed while he is temporarily serving in Word and Sacrament ministry “in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies.” This title would distinguish him from an ordained pastor.

## **C. Guidelines for Congregations regarding the Performance of Pastoral Functions When No Ordained Pastor Is Available**

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God has instituted the office of the public ministry (AC V) and that “nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” to serve in this office (AC XIV). Therefore, only those who hold the office of the public ministry should exercise distinctive functions of this office. However, when no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions by qualified individuals, lest God’s people be deprived of the opportunity for corporate worship and the celebration of the sacraments. The following guidelines are presented in order to assist congregations in providing for an orderly way of carrying out distinctive functions of the pastoral office in the absence of an ordained clergyman.

These guidelines consider four distinctive functions of the office of the public ministry, as identified by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, namely,

- preaching in the services of the congregation;
- leading the formal public services of worship;
- the public administration of sacraments; and
- the administration of the Office of the Keys as it pertains to the public pronouncement of absolution and church discipline.

### *1. Preaching in the Public Services*

In dealing with this function, a distinction should be made between the responsibility and function of composing and delivering sermons and the simpler task of serving as a “reader” who reads a sermon that has been composed and prepared by one who holds the office of the public ministry. In the latter case, the reader is serving as a kind of announcer or deliverer of a message composed by a pastor. The responsibility for supervision (episcopate) will be exercised by the supervising pastor.

*a. Reading Sermons Composed by a Pastor*

- i. In an emergency situation when the regular pastor or vacancy pastor of a congregation is unable to be present to preach because of illness, transportation problems, or some other circumstances in which the congregation or mission would be deprived of corporate worship, the elders of the congregation or responsible congregational leadership may with the consent of the pastor select a male member of the congregation to read in the public worship service a sermon composed by one who holds the office of the public ministry.
- ii. In circumstances where no resident pastor is available and the regular pastor or supply pastor is unable to preach in the congregation for a prolonged period of time, the selection of the lay reader should be approved of in advance by the district president, who will assure that the individual possesses qualities which would commend him for this ongoing role (e.g., spirituality, exemplary Christian life, excellent standing in the congregation, good communications skills, and a readiness to grow and learn.)

*b. Composing and Delivering Sermons by Individuals Not Holding the Office of the Public Ministry*

- i. In circumstances where there is no resident pastor and no pastor available to lead worship and preach regularly, arrangements may be made by a congregation or the responsible board, in consultation with the district president, to secure the services of a layman, licensed to preach and serve under the supervision of an ordained pastor.

Such laymen shall have

1. successfully pursued appropriate courses of study at a synodical seminary and been recommended by the seminary faculty to serve as a field worker or vicar; or
  2. been approved and licensed by the president of the district to which the congregation belongs.
- ii. The license to preach in a given district shall be issued by that district’s president in keeping with criteria and standards adopted and maintained by the Council of Presidents. The license shall be initially for no more than one year and shall clearly state in writing the conditions under which the license may be renewed. Subsequent licenses may be issued for up to two years but must likewise identify the specific conditions required for renewal of the license.
  - iii. All sermonic preparation and composition by such lay ministers shall be guided and directed by the supervising pastor. All sermons delivered by the lay minister, whether prepared by the lay minister or by another, should receive the approval of the supervising pastor prior to delivery in a public worship service. It is understood that where consultation is not possible, the supervising pastor will have made appropriate arrangements for exercising his accountability for the proclamation of the Word in the congregation.

*2. Leading the Public Worship Services*

The lay worship leader will follow only such liturgical forms as are approved and provided by the supervising pastor and which are acceptable to the congregation.

*3. The Public Administration of the Sacraments*

The third distinctive function, namely, “public administration of the sacraments,” will be dealt with as follows:

*a. Holy Baptism*

Holy Baptism will be administered by the supervising pastor or another rostered pastor. If not possible, the licensed layman will administer it.

*b. Holy Communion*

The supervising pastor will normally administer Holy Communion. However, “in exceptional circumstances,” when no ordained clergy is available and the congregation would otherwise be deprived of the Sacrament for a prolonged period of time, the licensed layman will preside, when specifically authorized to do so by the congregation and with the approval of a supervising pastor and the district president.

*4. The Public Administration of the Office of the Keys*

The administration of the Office of the Keys by means of the personal pronouncement of the absolution as it pertains to church discipline, and possible excommunication, ought not be carried out by those who do not hold the office of public ministry, since this can always be provided for on behalf of the congregation by those who hold the office of public ministry.

**D. Bylaw Stipulations—Review of Handbook Chapter VII (“Certified Professional Church Worker, Lay”), Part C (“Position Assistance and Listing”)**

In order to provide support for Certified Church Workers, Lay, and to assist congregations in securing these services, the committee recommends that

1. the Synod provide for the placing, supervising, listing, and referral of Certified Church Workers, Lay;
2. the Council of Presidents be made responsible for arranging for an appropriate way of providing for these services and that this be made a matter of first priority; and
3. appropriate bylaws incorporating these two recommendations be developed and be presented to the 1992 convention of the Synod.

**Action:** Adopted as amended (13).



## Appendix B: Resolution 13-02A To Regularize Status of Licensed Lay Deacons Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry

RESOLUTION 13-02A Overtures 13-01–47, 49–50 (CW, pp. 437–464)

WHEREAS, The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions teach that our Lord gave the keys of the kingdom to His whole church, the royal priesthood of believers (Matt. 16:15–19; Matt. 18:18–20; 1 Peter 2:9; Augsburg Confession [AC] Article XXVIII, paragraph 10; Smalcald Articles [SA], Section III, paragraph 7; Treatise [Tr] paragraph 11; see also Walther’s Church and Ministry/Office); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures and Confessions also teach that Christ established an office that is distinct from the priesthood of believers (the office of the public ministry) for teaching and nurturing His royal priests by means of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments (1 Cor. 12:29; Rom. 10:15; James 3:1; AC XIV; see also Walther’s Church and Ministry/Office); and

WHEREAS, The royal priesthood and the office of the public ministry are to have a complementary and not a competitive or conflicted relationship; and

WHEREAS, In its history the Lutheran church has always maintained the divine requirement (de jure divino) of the office of public ministry, while it has in many and various ways prepared men for the Office of the Public Ministry, since the manner of preparation for the office is by human arrangement (de jure humano); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church has always ensured, on the basis of Scripture: (1) that men who are to serve in the office of public ministry be examined as to their doctrine and life; (2) that the congregations they serve willingly call them into service; and (3) that the wider church (other churches in fellowship with the congregation) also affirms them as fellow ministers of the Word and Sacraments (see Acts 1:15–26; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5; see also Tr 24, 26, 67–70); and

WHEREAS, The rite of ordination, although not a divine institution (Church and Ministry, Ministry Thesis VI), is the apostolic custom by which Lutherans have designated and publicly acknowledged a man as a minister of Word and Sacrament, that is, as one who is in the Office of the Public Ministry and recognized by the wider fellowship as a fellow minister (Ap XIII 11–13); and

WHEREAS, In faithfulness to the Word of God and to its confession requiring a regular call for those who preach and administer the sacraments publicly in the church (AC XIV; Ap XIV), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has followed the practice of identifying those who are eligible to be called into the Office of the Public Ministry by the certification of one of the seminary faculties or the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry; and

WHEREAS, In a human institution such as the LCMS, such human arrangements are necessary in order to foster harmony and prevent needless confusion and division; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has long-recognized that challenging circumstances may make it difficult or impossible to provide a pastor for congregations and ministries, for example: (1) financial challenges (numerous congregations and missions are unable to support a pastor financially); (2) geographical challenges (small, isolated congregations in remote areas often face financial challenges and may have no pastors in geographic proximity to them); (3) demographic challenges (urban, minority, non-English-speaking, and ethnically diverse congregations and missions may find no rostered candidates available to fill their pastoral needs); and

WHEREAS, The practice of licensing lay deacons for temporary service in certain difficult circumstances, like the afore-mentioned examples, was approved by the LCMS in 1989 Res. 3-05B as a means to address the need for regular preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments by utilizing trained and supervised laymen to serve “temporarily” in Word and Sacrament ministry when “no pastor [is] available,” “in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies” (1989 Res. 3-05B, Nomenclature, Guidelines 1 b); and

WHEREAS, There has been significant dissension in the LCMS over the Synod-approved practice of licensing laymen to preach and administer the Sacraments while under the supervision of an ordained pastor, but the Synod needs to move forward together with deep concern for fidelity to the word of Christ as we confess it together and for faithfulness in the mission that Christ has given to His Church; and

WHEREAS, 1989 Res. 3-05B repeatedly references temporary service for deacons when no pastor is available in emergencies and exceptional circumstances, but in some cases deacons have served for years regularly preaching and administering the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, The presence of continuing dissension about licensed lay deacons is an aspect of further disagreement about elements of doctrine and practice, e.g., the understanding of the pastoral office, the relationship between the Office of the Public Ministry and the royal priesthood, the understanding of call and ordination, and faithful and effective ways to share the Gospel and plant churches in our post-Christian world; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) Program was established by the LCMS convention (2007 Res. 5-01B) in response to the need for effective theological education and practical training to prepare pastors to serve in particularly challenging settings and situations that prevent them from enrolling in residential theological education; and

WHEREAS, The Synod recognizes a need for flexibility in its approach to preparing men to serve in the Office of the Public Ministry while upholding the biblical requirement that they be men who are “above reproach” and “able to teach,” and so offers approved training programs to prepare pastors for urban and cross-cultural service, namely, the Center for Hispanic Studies, the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), all at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the Spanish-speaking SMP track at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFV); and

WHEREAS, There is a need within the LCMS to regularize the status of licensed lay deacons who are engaged in Word and Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, The Synod directed the President to appoint a task force to address questions about the practice of licensing lay deacons, and the task force, as required, reported a recommended plan to address questions (see Convention Workbook, pp.234–255) and the theological framework of the report has been affirmed by both seminary faculties and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has budgeted \$40,000 for the remainder of the current fiscal year and is committed to budgeting at least \$150,000 per year for the next two years to assist deacons entering the SMP and EIIT programs; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS recognize that “emergency knows no rule” and that no Synod action can or should prevent a congregation from taking reasonable and scripturally faithful steps necessary to provide for the Word to be proclaimed in time of emergency, while at the same time, every congregation of the Synod is required to address matters involving the Office of the Public Ministry in a way that is consistent with its subscription to Scripture and the Confessions, as well as its agreement to abide by the Synod’s Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS affirm and give thanks for the men who have recognized the needs of the church and its mission, serving as licensed lay deacons, preaching and administering the Sacraments in keeping with 1989 Res. 3-05B, often without remuneration and at personal cost, lest congregations be deprived of the means of grace; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS, while mindful of the need for continued conversation within the church, affirm the theological framework of the “2013 Resolution 4-06A Task Force Report,” namely, that a right calling to the office of public ministry requires that a man be properly prepared and examined regarding doctrine and life, be called by the congregation (or ministry) where he is to serve, and publicly appointed in a way so that the entire church fellowship recognizes the validity of his service (Acts 13:1–3; 14:21–23; 2 Tim. 2:24–26; Titus 1:5); and be it further

Resolved, That the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry establish and implement an expanded regional colloquy program (with appropriate regional colloquy committees) to regularize the status of current licensed lay deacons (LLDs) who are 50 years of age or older and who have been preaching the Gospel and/or administering the Sacraments publicly on behalf of the church for the past 2 years (de facto pastors), so that these servants of Christ can be called and ordained according to the order of the LCMS and be rostered as pastors with SMP status; and be it further

Resolved, That exceptions to the SMP colloquy requirements with respect to age and years of service for LLDs may be granted by the appropriate regional colloquy committee with the approval of the respective district president and the plenary of the Council of Presidents; and be it further

Resolved, That nothing in this resolution shall be construed as impeding the training, recognition, credentialing or service of deacons who do not publicly preach or administer the sacraments, namely, those who serve in ministries of mercy, education, or visitation, and so forth, or in an outreach role, assisting in evangelism and church planting (but not in public preaching and administration of the sacraments); and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents may continue to recruit, train, and credential new deacons for general varieties of service in the church that do not include public preaching and administration of the sacraments; and be it further

Resolved, That until January 1, 2018, district presidents may train and annually license lay deacons to preach publicly and to administer the Sacraments. Beyond that date in exceptional cases, as defined in (1) and (2) below, the appropriate district president may annually grant licensure with the consent of the plenary of the Council of Presidents and the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry. (1) the deacon serves under the direct supervision of an ordained pastor and is currently enrolled in or preparing for one of the LCMS training tracks for the office of public ministry and participates in the public ministry as an aspect of his training, e.g., in preparation for SMP, EIIT, etc.); or (2) the deacon serves in distinctive aspects of the office of public ministry (that is, preaching or administration of the sacraments) only during times of emergency or extraordinary need (when there is no ordained pastor available or able to serve), only on a temporary or occasional basis, and under the direct supervision of an ordained pastor; and be it further

Resolved, That those deacons currently licensed for and serving in Word and Sacrament Ministry (that is, publicly preaching and administering the sacraments) shall have until July 1, 2018, to: (1) apply to one of our seminaries for admission into an alternate route program, (2) apply for entrance into an SMP program, or (3) apply to the regional colloquy committee for admission to the SMP roster, unless granted a waiver by his district president, the plenary of the Council of Presidents, and the appropriate regional colloquy committee, and be it further

Resolved, That the district president, the plenary of the Council of Presidents and the regional colloquy committees, in making decisions related to the three resolves above, shall do so in a fashion that no congregation or current ministry will be forced to close or discontinue; and be it further

Resolved, That lay deacons licensed for Word and Sacrament Ministry who have applied for colloquy to the SMP roster prior to July 1, 2018, shall continue to serve under their current district licensure until the colloquy process is complete and certification is given by the Colloquy Committee; and be it further

Resolved, That upon the certification of the Colloquy Committee, the licensed lay deacons will be eligible to be called by the congregations where they have been serving, ordained into the Office of the Public Ministry, and placed on the roster of SMP pastors; and be it further

Resolved, That as recommended by the Res. 4-06A Task Force, the LCMS, in partnership with districts, congregations, and individuals, provide funding to ensure that financial constraints will not prevent any

eligible licensed lay deacon from participating in an LCMS seminary ordination-track program; and be it further

Resolved, That the First Vice-President of the Synod and three members of the Council of Presidents appointed by the Council be directed to draft by June 1, 2017, necessary policies and procedures for the implementation of this resolution, such policies and procedures to be finalized and approved by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS thank and commend the Res. 4-06A Task Force for its work on the question of licensed lay deacons.

[The estimated cost to implement this proposed resolution appears in the Report of the Finance Floor Committee – found in Sunday's issue of Today's Business.]



## Appendix C: A Suggested Statement on the Theology of Lay Ministry

**(Sample: NORTHWEST DISTRICT LAY ASSISTANT POSITION)**

**(Submitted to the CTCR for review in August 2014)**

The theological foundation of lay assistant ministry in the Northwest District is based on understanding the term “church” as the PEOPLE OF GOD (1 Peter 2:9). The church exists to express the love of God in the world (John 3:16). Furthermore, the church is God’s mission (Matt. 28:19). And, the church is God’s ministry (Mark 10:43–45). Lay ministry is part of the full involvement of the whole church mobilized to serve in mission and ministry. Lay ministry is an integral part of pastoral formation and public ministry practice. The power is in God’s Word. The authority is in the call.

All lay assistant ministers function with the understanding that all the people of God have received the keys of the kingdom of heaven and are spiritual priests (John 20:19–23). They are the people of God entrusted with the Gospel ministry, the means of grace, Word and Sacrament (2 Cor. 5:18–21; 1 Cor. 11:23–25).

Lay assistant ministers (male and female) as members of a local congregation are part of the church as the people of God called to mission and ministry. They function by vocation locally and globally, in private (personal) and in public spheres. Lay assistant ministers take the Gospel where the people are.

Male lay assistant ministers, locally trained, certified and licensed, may by regular call from a local congregation provide Word and Sacraments, through which God “as through means gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel” (Article V, Augsburg Confession).

The Office of Public Ministry is established by God Himself. The holders of that office are the called and ordained pastors of the church. Male lay assistant ministers, when called, hold the title of deacon, pastoral assistant, or similar. Properly commissioned, they are entrusted with the functions of the Office of Public Ministry. They serve always under the supervision of called and ordained pastors. This is done in accordance with LCMS polity.

Objections to lay ministers are addressed from the position of the Office of the Public Ministry (the pastor). These objections are defensible in this context. They, however, do not adequately represent God’s trust of the ministry of the Gospel to all the people of God.

Lay assistant ministers take seriously the essential place of God’s trust of the ministry of the Gospel to all the people of God, and understand theology of lay ministry put to practice challenges the church to both revitalization and reform.

## Appendix D: A Policy Concerning the Use of Deacons

Before a lay worker is licensed to preach and authorized to function as a deacon in a congregation of a district of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the following conditions must be met.

1.00 The congregation shall have secured, with the assistance of the district president and the circuit visitor, the services of an ordained pastor to assume responsibility for the oversight (episkopé) in the congregation to be served by the deacon. This arrangement, together with details concerning compensation, shall be shared with the district president and the circuit visitor and shall be approved by the district president.

1.01 The ordained pastor shall have general oversight of the congregation; that is, he shall supervise the doctrine and life of the congregation and the administration of the Office of the Keys in it to ascertain that they are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod.

1.02 The deacon shall carry out the daily work of the ministry in the congregation, including the performance of certain distinctive functions of the pastoral office, in accordance with the guidelines and under the supervision of the ordained pastor responsible for the general oversight of the congregation.

2.00 The congregation shall have secured, with the assistance of the district president and the circuit visitor, the services of an ordained pastor to assume responsibility for supervising the work of the deacon according to the guidelines established for the district. This arrangement, together with details concerning compensation, shall be shared with the district president and the circuit visitor and shall be approved by the district president.

3.00 Authorization to a congregation to permit a lay worker to function as a deacon, that is, to conduct Word and Sacrament ministry, shall expire on December 31st of that year. An application from the congregation for renewal shall be submitted to the district president by December 1st of that year.

3.01 This renewal applies only to the authorization to function as a deacon. It does not apply to the contract between the lay worker and the congregation.

4.00 The license to preach issued to the lay worker which enables him to serve as a deacon expires on December 31st of each year but may be renewed on an annual basis. Application for renewal shall be submitted by the deacon to the district president by December 1st of each year.

5.00 All congregations obtaining the services of a lay worker to serve as a deacon, as well as all lay workers serving as deacons, shall agree in writing to follow both this policy and the terms of the “Guidelines for Congregations Regarding the Performance of Pastoral Functions When No Ordained Pastor is Available” (1989 Res. 3-05B, Wichita).

6.00 In the event that any of the arrangements or renewals described in 1.00, 2.00, 3.00, 4.00, or 5.00 above is denied by the district president, the congregation may appeal the district president’s decision to the praesidium (vice-presidents) of the district. The decision of the praesidium is final and not subject to further appeal.



## Appendix E: Guidelines for Congregations Regarding the Performance of Pastoral Functions When No Ordained Pastor Is Available

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that God has instituted the office of the public ministry (AC V) and that “nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” to serve in this office (ACX XIV). Therefore, only those who hold the office of the public ministry should exercise distinctive functions of this office. However, when no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions by qualified individuals, lest God’s people be deprived of the opportunity for corporate worship and the celebration of the sacraments. The following guidelines are presented in order to assist congregations in providing for an orderly way of carrying out distinctive functions of the pastoral office in the absence of an ordained clergyman. “The title *deacon* is established by which a layman would be addressed while he is temporarily serving in Word and Sacrament ministry ‘in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies.’ This title would distinguish him from an ordained pastor” (Wichita, 1989 Res. 3-05B VII B4). In keeping with the doctrine of the sacred Scripture, the work of a deacon is reserved to men.

The following are guidelines provided by 1989 Res. 3-05B. They consider four distinctive functions of the office of the public ministry, as identified by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, namely, preaching in the services of the congregation, leading the formal public Divine Service, the public administration of the Sacraments, and the administration of the Office of the Keys as it pertains to the public pronouncement of absolution and church discipline.

### *1. Preaching in the Public Services*

In dealing with this function, a distinction should be made between the responsibility and function of composing and delivering sermons and the simpler task of serving as a “reader” who reads a sermon which has been composed and prepared by one who holds the office of the public ministry. In the latter case, the reader is serving as a kind of announcer or deliverer of a message composed by a pastor. The responsibility for supervision (episcopate) will be exercised by the supervising pastor.

#### *a. Reading Sermons Composed by a Pastor*

- 1) In an emergency situation when the regular pastor or vacancy pastor of a congregation is unable to be present to preach because of illness, transportation problems, or some other circumstances in which the congregation or mission would be deprived of corporate worship, the elders of the congregation or responsible congregational leadership may with the consent of the pastor select a male member of the congregation to read in the public worship service a sermon composed by one who holds the office of the public ministry.

- 2) In circumstances where no resident pastor is available and the regular pastor or supply pastor is unable to preach in the congregation for a prolonged period of time, the selection of the lay reader should be approved of in advance by the district president who will assure that the individual possesses qualities which would commend him for this ongoing role (e.g., spirituality, exemplary Christian life, excellent standing in the congregation, good communication skills, and a readiness to grow and learn).*b. Composing and Delivering Sermons by Individuals Not Holding the Office of the Public Ministry*
- 1) In circumstances where there is no resident pastor and no pastor available to lead worship and preach regularly, arrangements may be made by a congregation or the responsible board, in consultation with the district president, to secure the services of a layman, licensed to preach and serve under the supervision of an ordained pastor.

Such laymen shall have

- a) successfully pursued appropriate courses of study at a Synod seminary and been recommended by the seminary faculty to serve as a field worker or vicar; or
  - b) been approved and licensed by the president of the district to which the congregation belongs.
- 2) The license to preach in a given district shall be issued by that district's president in keeping with criteria and standards adopted and maintained by the Council of Presidents. The license shall be initiated for no more than one year and shall clearly state in writing the conditions under which the license may be renewed. Subsequent licenses may be issued for up to two years but must likewise identify the specific conditions required for renewal of the license.
- 3) All sermonic preparation and composition by such licensed layman shall be guided and directed by the supervising pastor. All sermons delivered by the licensed layman, whether prepared by the licensed layman or by another, should receive the approval of the supervising pastor prior to delivery in a public worship service. It is understood that where consultation is not possible, the supervising pastor will have made appropriate arrangements for exercising his accountability for the proclamation of the Word in the congregation.

## *2. Leading the Public Service*

The lay worship leader will follow only such liturgical forms as are approved and provided by the supervising pastor and which are acceptable to the congregation.

## *3. The Public Administration of the Sacraments*

The third distinctive function, “Public Administration of the Sacraments,” will be dealt with as follows:

*a. Holy Baptism*

Holy Baptism will be administered by the supervising pastor or another rostered pastor. If not possible, the licensed layman will administer it.

Revised 6/19/2025

*b. Holy Communion*

The supervising pastor will normally administer Holy Communion. However, “in exceptional circumstances,” when no ordained clergy is available and the congregation would otherwise be deprived of the Sacrament for a prolonged period of time, the licensed layman will preside, when specifically authorized to do so by the congregation and with the approval of a supervising pastor and the district president.

*4. The Public Administration of the Office of the Keys*

The administration of the Office of the Keys by means of the personal pronouncement of the absolution as it pertains to church discipline, and possible excommunication, ought not be carried out by those who do not hold the office of public ministry, since this can always be provided for on behalf of the congregation by those who hold the office of public ministry.

(Wichita *Proceedings* 1989 Res. 3-05B VII C, pp. 112-113)

## Appendix F: Guidelines – Supervising the Work of a Deacon

1. The supervising pastor shall faithfully and carefully oversee the work of the deacon for whose ministry he is responsible.
  - A. He shall supervise the preaching and teaching of the deacon. He shall see to it that the Word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is taught in its truth and purity and in accordance with the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord.
  - B. He shall supervise the deacon's administration of the Holy Sacraments in cases where the deacon is authorized because of prolonged absence of an ordained pastor. He shall see to it that the Sacraments are administered according to the divine command of Christ and in accordance with usage of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and, specifically, of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He shall also see to it that the guidelines of the Synod concerning the administration of the Sacraments as set forth in Res. 3-05B of the 1989 Synod convention (Wichita) are followed.
  - C. He shall encourage and guide the deacon to minister to all members of the congregation of every age and social condition, to visit the sick and the dying, to admonish the indifferent and the erring, and to do so in an evangelical manner.
  - D. He shall encourage and assist the deacon in promoting the spiritual welfare of every member of the congregation through Bible study, personal and family devotions, and in other appropriate ways.
  - E. He shall supervise the deacon as he instructs the catechumens, both children and adults, in the Word of God and the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in order to prepare them for communicant membership in the congregation.
  - F. He shall supervise and assist the deacon in promoting and guiding the mission activity of the congregation—specifically, to encourage evangelism, that is, to reach out to the surrounding community with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to encourage support of mission work through district and Synod, and to train members of the congregation for the work of evangelism.
  - G. He shall supervise and assist the deacon in the work of parish administration, so that the policies and procedures of the congregation serve to help it achieve its mission for Christ and so that the work of the congregation is carried out in an orderly and appropriate manner.
2. The supervising pastor shall not only supervise the work of the deacon but shall also encourage him, set him an example of Christian conduct, and be supportive and helpful to him, freely sharing ideas, insights, experience, and other help so that, by the grace of God, the combined efforts of the supervising pastor and the deacon will result in the edification of the congregation and the up-building of the Church of Jesus Christ, both in the local community and throughout



the world.

3. The supervising pastor is also the pastor who has assumed responsibility to oversee the congregation which is being served by the deacon.
4. As the one responsible for the oversight of the congregation being served by the deacon, he shall apply the divinely ordained discipline of the church in a manner agreeable to the Word of God and, as much as possible, keep the deacon informed of his activity in this area.

## Appendix G: Service of Deacon Recognition and Credentialing

### Michigan School of Missional Formation

(The Deacon Candidates for recognition and credentialing are invited to stand.)

**Director of Leadership Development:** (Addressing the Chairman of the CDQ)

\_\_\_\_\_, as Chairman of the Michigan District Commission on Deacon Qualifications, do you attest that these men have demonstrated successful completion of the course of theological and practical spiritual formation outlined by the Michigan School of Missional Formation (formerly known as MI District Deacon/MAP training) and have been examined by personal interview with the members of the Commission?

**Chairman of the CDQ:** I do so attest that these men have been interviewed by the Commission on Deacon Qualifications and have met the requirements, for Recognition as Credentialed Deacons for service in their respective congregations. They have been requested by their congregation to serve as a Credentialed Deacon, are under the leadership of a Supervising Pastor, have successfully completed their studies, and have demonstrated a mature faith in Christ and a ready spirit for service in the Church.

**Director of Leadership Development:** Do you, on behalf of the Commission on Deacon Qualifications recommend these men for Credentialing as Deacons?

**Chairman of the CDQ:** I do so recommend.

+++++

**Director of Leadership Development:** (Addressing the Candidates)

**Dear brothers in Christ, you have each been asked to serve as a Credentialed Deacon in your respective congregations. This ministry has been established to strengthen and support the Office of the Public Ministry and its work. Therefore, you have prepared for this ministry by prayer and study. You have been declared ready to undertake this sacred responsibility and privilege. Hear the Word of God concerning this ministry.**

**Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:4-8)**

**Jesus called [the disciples] together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28)**

**The office of leadership in the church carries with it both privilege and responsibility. St. Paul describes it this way:**

**1 Timothy 3:1, 8-10, 12-13 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task...Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons...A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.**

**So that all, here present, may be assured of your public testimony, I now ask you:**

**Do you accept Holy Scripture to be the only rule and norm of all doctrine and life in the church?**

**Response: I do.**

**P: Do you accept the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the *Book of Concord* to be a correct exposition of Holy Scripture?**

**R: I do.**

**P: Do you solemnly promise faithfully to serve God's people in accordance with the Word of God, the Ecumenical Creeds (namely, the Apostles', The Nicene, and the Athanasian), and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church?**

**R: I do.**

**P: Will you, trusting in God's care, seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a godly life?**

**R: I will with the help of God.**

**P: The Almighty and most merciful God strengthen and assist you always. Amen.**

(Deacon candidates are seated and then each is invited forward by name to be consecrated and Credentialed and to receive his Deacon Stole.)

**Dean of Instruction:** (Rev. Ken Huner) \_\_\_\_ **(Name)** \_\_\_\_, has been requested to serve by \_\_\_\_ **(name of Congregation)** \_\_\_\_, his Supervising Pastor is \_\_\_\_ **(Name of Supervisor)** \_\_\_\_, and he will be serving in the areas of \_\_\_\_ **(Select a couple items from Ministry outline)** \_\_\_\_\_. He has demonstrated specific interest/capacity while studying \_\_\_\_ **??** \_\_\_\_\_. He is married to \_\_\_\_ **(wife's name, if married)** \_\_\_\_\_.

(The Dean of Instruction then assists the Director of Leadership Development and the CDQ Chairman to consecrate and place the stole on the Deacon.)

**Director of Leadership Development:** (addressing the individual Candidate) **Are you ready and willing to assume the work of this ministry and to be Credentialed as a Deacon in the church?**

**R: I am.**

*[The candidate kneels.]*

**P: [Addressing the candidate and laying hands on his head] \_\_\_\_\_, I consecrate you as a Credentialed Deacon in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

**C: Amen.**

(After all deacon candidates have been so recognized and consecrated, all the newly Credentialed candidates stand and gather at the altar rail as a group.)

**P: Let us pray.**

**Gracious and most merciful Lord, by the Holy Spirit you have given your people diverse gifts and raised up faithful men in your church to assist and support the office and work of the public ministry. Grant your blessing these men, appointed to service in your Church, that by their labors the Office of the Public Ministry may be strengthened to the glory of your name and the building up of your people; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

C: Amen.

(The service continues with the blessing by deacons and pastors present at the service.)

## Appendix H: Rite of Induction into Service as a Credentialed Deacon (Congregation Use)

*[Officiant:]* (Name) \_\_\_\_\_, after prayerful consideration, you have been commissioned by \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as \_\_\_\_\_. After prayerful consideration, you have accepted this responsibility. Today we add a final ingredient in that decision; we formally induct you in that ministry, pledge our support to you, and add our prayers to yours in asking the Lord's blessings upon you in your new ministry.

It is not mere chance that you are in this position. It is the Lord of Life who guides and directs his church in selecting workers in the kingdom. The Lord has been preparing you for many years for this ministry. It is with joy that I welcome and induct you in this position.

The office of deacon is an office with great paradox. You are both a leader and a servant; a teacher of the word and a servant of it; a mentor and a learner; able to supervise others and under supervision yourself. It is only as you are led and guided by the Lord that you can be lead and lead and guide others to the Lord. Your greatest need will be a clear vision of the mission of our Lord; your greatest strength must be in His guidance and providence. On your own you will accomplish nothing but disaster; with the Lord you can accomplish much. This is why we dare not send you into ministry unprepared. You need the prayers of those gathered here and around (state geographical area) to support and encourage your ministry. As you battle the forces of evil, you will have spiritual warriors praying and working with you. When you are weak and afraid, there will be others you can lean on for comfort and courage. So before I ask you about your willingness to submit to this ministry, I ask those of you gathered here this evening:

*[To the assembly:]* Will you lift up \_\_\_\_\_ in your prayers; will you work beside him in the furtherance of this ministry; will you be brothers and sisters in Christ to him to encourage, support, and strengthen him? If so, answer "Yes, as the Lord gives me strength."

The office of leadership in the church carries with it both privilege and responsibility. St. Paul describes it this way:

1 Timothy 3:1: Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.<sup>2</sup> Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,<sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.<sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.<sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)<sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.<sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

(Name), be assured of the care and support of those who have invited you to this ministry. We believe you have the qualities necessary for this ministry. We believe it is God himself who has led you to this moment. Do you today, in the presence of God and these witnesses solemnly promise to be faithful in the exercise of your duties and to remain faithful to the Lord and his will? If so, answer "Yes, with the help of God."

Will you remain faithful to the Lord always and serve him with your heart and life so that, through you, his kingdom may be expanded and many may be brought to spiritual Life? If so, answer “Yes, as the Lord blesses me and this ministry.”

(Name), please kneel and receive the rite of induction.

(Name), as authorized by the district president, I hereby induct you into the ministry of (Name/Description of Position). May the Lord bless and keep you in his grace and care. May he strengthen you when you are weak, comfort you when you are discouraged, equip you when you are afraid, and guide you when you are confused. The Lord bless you and keep you now and always. Amen.

*[Pastors, guests, family, and others who wish to give a greeting or blessing are invited to come forward and do so at this time.]*

Prayer

## Appendix I: Compensation Chart (April 2025)

## Classic Plus Per Course Compensation Schedule

	Base Compensation	Mileage and Expenses	Compensation for Over 8 Students	Additional Compensation for 11-15 Students	Plus Additional Compensation for each Additional 5 Students Over 15	Notes
Instructor	\$1,300	X	N/A	\$100	\$50	Teaching from existing base of information
Instructor	\$1,500	X	N/A	\$100	\$50	Creating new course content/format such as Online Instruction of Greek III
Instructor	\$200	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	Independent Study, used during transition to Kairos
Dean of Instruction	N/A	X	\$100	N/A	N/A	
Registrar	\$300	X	N/A	\$50	\$25	
Registrar	\$25	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	Independent Study, used during transition to Kairos
Treasurer	\$25	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Substitute Instructor (Approved by Dean of Instruction)	Amount prorated per the number of hours.	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Instructor Aide per 8 hours (More than 15 Students) Allowed for per the Instructor's Request and Approved by the Dean of Instruction	\$200	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	2016 Policy Manual
Additional Aide per 8 hours (More than 30 Students) Allowed for per the Instructor's Request and Approved by the Dean of Instruction	\$200	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Guest Instructors	As approved by the CDQ					

Revision Date: June 15, 2025

## Appendix J: Tuition and Fees Chart (APRIL 2025)

### MSMF Tuition and Fee Schedule

Tuition		
Classic Plus Course for Credit	\$350	
Classic Plus Course to Audit	\$100	
Classic Plus Course for Review	\$0	Deacons, Ministry Assistants, and those who have taken the Course - No Charge
Kairos Student taking a Classic Plus Course	\$100	A Kairos Student may take a Classic Plus Course to supplement their Kairos studies, but they must get their credit on the Kairos platform. An example might be a student is taking Greek in Kairos. They may attend the Classic Plus Greek Classes to supplement their Kairos studies.
Classic Plus Course (Spouse)	\$0	The spouse, of a Classic Plus Student who is taking a course for credit, may attend a class at No Charge under the following provisions: 1. The spouse is not taking the course for credit. 2. Both spouses are in the course at the same time.
Lay Leadership Training Course on the eLearning site (Certificate)	\$100	
Lay Leadership Training Course on the eLearning site with mentor (Certificate)	\$150	The student desires to have their work reviewed and responded to.
Lay Leadership Training Course on the eLearning site for credit	\$350	Note, this is an exception and must be approved by the Dean of Instruction. This is meant for those who might have to wait an exceptionally long time to complete their program courses because of scheduling arrangements. This requires a mentor to work with the student.

Fees		
Application to the Michigan School of Missional Formation	\$100	
Matriculation	\$100	

Revision Date: June 15, 2025