

## **Policy for Synodical Lay Worship Leadership Program**

**Adopted by Continuing Resolution**

**Synod Council, 6 February 2021**

- I. Commission
  - A. There shall be a Commission for Synodical Lay Worship Leadership (hereafter, “the commission”).
    - 1. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the Synod Council.
    - 2. The composition and terms of service of the members of the commission shall be determined by Synod Council.
  - B. The commission, in consultation with the bishop, shall have general oversight of licensed synodical lay worship leaders.
  - C. The commission shall establish standards for licensed lay worship leaders in general and for each class of licensure specifically.
  - D. The commission shall prepare examinations for licensure and see to the administration of the same.
  - E. The commission shall develop mechanisms for review of licensed lay worship leaders.
  - F. The commission shall develop mechanisms for renewal and revocation of licensure.
  - G. The commission may make recommendation to the Synod Council on any matter related to licensed lay worship leadership.
- II. General Provisions for Synodical Lay Worship Leaders
  - A. Be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, or, in exceptional cases, a person appointed by the commission with the concurrence of the bishop
  - B. Subscribe to and preach and teach in agreement with the Holy Scriptures (rule & norm) and the Lutheran Confessions (Book of Concord)
  - C. Demonstrate liturgical and homiletical competency
  - D. Abide by the standards for clergy conduct as set by the ELCA and this synod
- III. Procedures for Licensure
  - A. Candidates for any class of licensure shall submit an application to the commission, providing all information requested by the commission in the application process.
  - B. Candidates shall be examined in both knowledge of subject matter and practical skills appropriate to the class of licensure being sought.
  - C. Licensure shall be for a period of time determined by the commission, the length of time being at the discretion of the commission for both class and individual concerns.
  - D. A licensed lay worship leader will not discharge duties inconsistent with the class of licensure held.
  - E. A licensed lay worship leader will submit reports to the commission as the commission directs.
  - F. A licensed lay worship leader in one class may apply for licensure in another class.
  - G. A licensed lay worship leader shall cease to discharge the office upon expiration, suspension, or revocation of licensure.
- IV. General Provisions for Supervisors
  - A. Requirements for Supervisors
    - 1. Be a member of one of the following classes:
      - a. Clergy of this synod
      - b. WV-WMD Synodical Lay Worship Leader Master Preacher
      - c. In exceptional cases, a person appointed by the commission with the concurrence of the Bishop
    - 2. Skills
      - a. Be versed in the subject matter and skills required for the class of licensure

supervised.

b. Be skilled at giving constructive criticism.

3. Supervisors shall be assigned by the commission.

B. Duties

1. Provide assistance and advice on the conduct of the office.

2. Be available to answer questions about worship.

3. Provide constructive criticism.

4. Provide evaluation as requested by the commission.

5. Report inability or unwillingness on the part of the licensed lay worship leader to discharge the office according to the norms set by the synod.

V. Four Classes of License

A. Reader

1. Be under supervision, the supervisor being appointed by the Commission for Synodical Lay Worship Leadership.

2. Lead worship according to the rites and rubrics found in the *LBW* and *ELW*.

a. Ante-communion (The non-communion option of the Service of Holy Communion)

b. Service of the Word

c. Matins (Morning Prayer)

d. Vespers (Evening Prayer)

e. Such other rites as necessary in consultation with the reader's supervising pastor.

3. Read, at the point in the liturgy normally appointed for the sermon/homily, a sermon, homily, or some other suitable spiritual text or message.

a. Such reading shall normally be from the approved list of resources.

b. Departure from the approved list of resources shall be in consultation with the supervisor.

B. Apprentice Preacher

1. Be under supervision, the supervisor being appointed by the Commission for Synodical Lay Worship Leadership.

2. Lead worship consistent with the expectations of the Reader.

3. Preaches, at the point in the liturgy normally appointed for the sermon/homily, a sermon of his/her own preparation, said sermon having been reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

C. Jour Preacher

1. Lead worship consistent with the expectations of the Reader.

2. Preachers, at the point in the liturgy normally appointed for the sermon/homily, a sermon of his/her own preparation.

D. Master Preacher

1. Lead worship consistent with the expectations of the Reader.

2. Preachers, at the point in the liturgy normally appointed for the sermon/homily, a sermon of his/her own preparation.

3. Be willing to serve as supervisor to Readers, Apprentices, and Journeymen.

VI. Norms

A. Liturgical norms

1. Liturgy & Rubrics:

a. A Synodical Lay Worship Leaders shall conduct worship according to the general and specific rubrics as found in the worship book employed by the congregation being served, assuming that worship book is one published by the publishing house of the ELCA or one of its predecessors.

- b. A Synodical Lay Worship Leader is not expected to conduct liturgies other than those regularly employed by the ELCA at large.
- c. Synodical Lay Worship Leaders shall not:
  - (1) Related to Holy Communion
    - (a) Celebrate at Holy Communion
    - (b) Concelebrate at Holy Communion
    - (c) Administer Holy Communion from the reserved Sacrament unless granted express permission by the bishop
  - (2) Related to Baptism
    - (a) Baptize except in case of emergency, such emergency never being a matter of convenience
    - (b) Preside at the Rite of Confirmation
    - (c) Preside at the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism.
  - (3) Related to Absolution
    - (a) Use the formula for absolution reserved for presbyters (i.e., "...as a called and ordained minister...")
    - (b) Preside at the Rite for Corporate Confession and Forgiveness or otherwise administer absolution and/or impose hands
    - (c) Act as confessor in the Rite for Individual Confession and Forgiveness
  - (4) Related to other pastoral acts
    - (a) Preside at the Marriage Rite within or without the church (exception: civil magistrates, acting in their capacity as such, may preside over the Marriage Rite but not in conjunction with synodical license)
    - (b) Preside at burials, funerals, and memorials within or without the church unless granted express permission by the bishop or the pastor loci (exception: chaplains for a government and civic organizations, acting in their capacity as such, may preside at burials, funerals, and memorials but not in conjunction with synodical license)
    - (c) Preside at the Rite for Commendation of the Dying unless granted express permission by the bishop or the pastor loci
    - (d) Preside over the Rite for the Laying on of Hands and Anointing the Sick
    - (e) Preside at the Rite for Excommunication
  - (5) Related to polity acts
    - (a) Install offices of the congregation
    - (b) Preside over the reception of new members
    - (c) Preside over the reinstatement of members
  - (6) Discharge any function reserved to the diaconal, presbyteral, or episcopal office.
- 2. Vestments: The vesture of a Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall be consistent with those employed regularly by the ELCA at large.
  - a. These include
    - (1) Alb
    - (2) Cassock and Surplice
    - (3) Preaching gown, *i.e.*,
      - (a) Geneva Gown (black)
      - (b) Talar (black)
      - (c) Academic gown (academic hood and/or hat optional)
    - (4) Morning coat
    - (5) Business formal

- (6) Business casual in extremely hot conditions
  - (7) Chaplain's uniform by those serving in an approved ELCA Federal Chaplaincy
  - (8) Habit or other symbols of ecclesiastical fraternity with the approval of the bishop
  - (9) A small cross is optional
  - b. A Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall not wear
    - (1) Stole (presbyteral or diaconal)
    - (2) Chausable
    - (3) Clerical collars or tabs
    - (4) Symbols of fraternal or other non-ecclesiastical nature or organization
- B. Homiletic Norms
1. Shall preach and teach in agreement with the whole corpus of the Lutheran Confessions as found in the Book of Concord
  2. Shall use appropriate rhetorical techniques
  3. Shall employ proper mechanics (*e.g.*, projection, annunciation, pacing, etc.)
- C. Arrangements for Services
1. Congregations shall arrange directly with the Synodical Lay Worship Leader for services
    - a. When a congregation has a pastor under call, this shall normally be done by the pastor unless the pastor has delegated that work to the council or member of the congregation.
    - b. When a congregation does not have a pastor under call, this shall normally be done by someone delegated that work by the interim pastor, but may be arranged by the interim.
  2. Advanced information provided to the Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall include
    - a. Time(s) and place(s) of the service(s)
    - b. Warnings with respect to travel
    - c. Liturgy to be employed, such as a bulletin or rubric, including
      - (1) whether there are worship assistants and what their roles are if any;
      - (2) any special liturgical notes, remembering that the Synodical Lay Worship Leader probably does not know local customs that the locals may assume that everyone does everywhere else.
    - d. Pericopes to be employed, especially if deviating from the lectionary (RCL) as found on the ELCA website.
    - e. Day to be observed, especially when there is a choice between a feast/festival/commemoration or regular cycle of days.
  3. A Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall not provide services in the following circumstances unless authorized to do so by the bishop.
    - a. Congregations not of the WV-WMD Synod (either ELCA outside the judicatory or non-ELCA)
    - b. Congregations of the WV-WMD Synod under suspension
    - c. Congregations of the WV-WMD Synod that the bishop has identified as unsuitable for service rendered by Synodical Lay Worship Leaders
- D. Reporting
1. The Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall maintain a record of all engagements including
    - a. Place, date, and time
    - b. Number in attendance
    - c. Liturgy used
    - d. Text/topic preached upon
    - e. Compensated or not and whether the compensation met guidelines

- f. Any additional notes that may be helpful to the commission or bishop
    - 2. The Synodical Lay Worship Leader regularly submit a copy for the record to the commission as directed.
  - E. Collegial Norms: A Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall observe †S14.19 of the *Constitution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*.
- VII. Remuneration
  - A. The Synodical Lay Worship Leader shall be compensated according to the standards enacted from time to time by the Synod Council
  - B. The commission may make recommendations to Synod Council with respect to compensation
  - C. Different classes of Synodical Lay Worship Leaders, at the discretion of Synod Council, may be compensated at different rates.
  - D. Congregations shall transmit compensation to a Synodical Lay Worship Leader in a timely fashion
- VIII. Discipline
  - A. Grounds for discipline shall include, but not be limited to,
    - 1. Failure to discharge the office
    - 2. Failure to abide by the policies set by the commission
    - 3. Deviation from the doctrinal basis of the office
    - 4. Violation of the norms of conduct
    - 5. Inability to conduct the office
    - 6. Termination of voting membership in a congregation of this synod
  - B. Procedures
    - 1. When there is reason to believe that one of the grounds for discipline has been met, the commission or the bishop may suspend the license pending investigation
    - 2. The commission shall investigate the matter and make a determination as to the facts of the case and take appropriate action
  - C. The commission may take any of the following actions
    - 1. Dismiss the case
    - 2. Recommend remediation
    - 3. Censure
    - 4. Suspension of license
    - 5. Revocation of license