

# **GUIDELINES RELATED TO NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTRY**

## **I. Definition and Criteria for Non-Stipendiary Ministry**

Non-stipendiary ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is understood to be service as an ordained/lay diaconal minister without regard to compensation for such service.

- A. It may be either service for no stipend (or for reimbursed expenses only) or for a token stipend that is not commensurate with the normal salary guidelines for rostered ministry.
- B. Non-stipendiary calls are not eligible for participation in the ELCIC Pension and Benefits Plan; therefore, it also is understood that non-stipendiary service is possible only when there is clear evidence that the ordained/lay diaconal minister has adequate alternative income and health insurance.
- C. A letter of call to non-stipendiary ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada may be issued only by a Synod Council following approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary ministry is not normally intended for an initial call.
- D. The ordained/lay diaconal minister serving in a non-stipendiary call shall be accountable to the synod bishop and Synod Council in the carrying out of this ministry. Such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation to the Synod Council.
- E. A call to non-stipendiary service shall be a one-year term call that may be renewed by the Synod Council only on the basis of the satisfactory fulfillment of the established criteria.
- F. The criteria under which a Synod Council may issue a letter of call to an ordained/lay diaconal minister for non-stipendiary service include the following:
  - 1. There shall be a clearly defined statement of the need for this pastor/lay diaconal minister to provide for Word and Sacrament/Word and Service ministry in the synod and a rationale for this call to be for non-stipendiary service, including an annual ministry plan;
  - 2. The minimum commitment by the ordained/lay diaconal minister shall be a monthly average of 10 hours per week to the ministry to which called;
  - 3. The ordained/lay diaconal minister shall meet the criteria and standards of this church for its ordained/lay diaconal ministers;
  - 4. The Synod Council must determine that a call to non-stipendiary service is extended in order to carry out a specific ministry on behalf of the synod.

## **II. Action by the Synod Bishop and Synod Council**

When the synod bishop and Synod Council believe that the criteria for a non-stipendiary letter of call are met by a specific ministry, the Synod Council may propose by a majority vote a letter of call.

- A. Final action to extend such a letter of call is contingent upon the approval of the Conference of Bishops.
- B. The Synod Council forwards its proposal, together with the rationale for issuing the call to non-stipendiary ministry, to the Conference of Bishops.
- C. Should the Conference of Bishops approve the request and the ministry begin, the Synod Council will provide for an annual review and, if appropriate, renewal of the non-stipendiary call.

**III. Action by the Conference of Bishops**

- A. The Conference of Bishops acts upon requests for calls to non-stipendary ministry by majority vote. It reports its decision to the Synod Council seeking such approval.
- B. When approval is given by the Conference of Bishops, the Synod Council may proceed with the issuance of a letter of call to non-stipendary ministry and may annually renew such a call without subsequent action by the Conference of Bishops.

Approved by National Church Council  
March 22, 2003