



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Eglise Evangelique Luthérienne au Canada

**GUIDELINES RELATED TO *SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED*
LAY MINISTRY OF THE WORD
in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

Lay Ministry of the Word is a synodically authorized ministry that exists to provide pastoral leadership for communities whose needs cannot be met by rostered persons. Those who provide such ministry are not rostered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada but are authorized by the synod to provide a specific ministry, within a particular setting, for a specific period of time.

When such need exists, the synodical bishop, acting with the consent of the community to be served, may authorize an individual(s) to provide Lay Ministry of the Word. Such individuals will be trained and licensed to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location and shall be supervised by a pastor appointed by the synodical bishop. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the bishop in consultation with the community to be served. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed every two years and renewed inasmuch as a demonstrated need for such ministry remains.

1. **Identification of Need:** Ministry needs requiring such service are identified by the bishop in consultation with the community to be served.
2. **Invitation to Service:** An individual who demonstrates the gifts for such ministry is identified and invited to consider entering a programme of preparation. This invitation comes from the synodical bishop. Such persons are not self-selected.
3. **Qualifications:** A person invited to prepare for Lay Ministry of the Word shall have been an active member of an ELCIC congregation for at least five years.

Persons who are considered for a synodically authorized ministry must meet the criteria for public ministry within a congregation or other ministry of this church, namely:

- a. evidence of mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ;
- b. knowledge and acceptance of the Confession of Faith of this church; and
- c. willingness to meet this church's expectations concerning the personal conduct and behavior of persons serving in public ministry.

Prior to entering the synod's programme of preparation an individual must:

- a. Register with the synod's Committee for Theological Education and Leadership (CTEL) or Candidacy Committee (CCOM).
- b. Consult with synodical staff and the synodical committee responsible for the synod's programme of preparation; and
- c. Demonstrate the ability and willingness to participate in a programme of preparation leading to possible service in Lay Ministry of the Word.

4. Synodical CTEL or CCOM:

The Synod's CTEL or CCOM determines the programme of preparation for persons considered eligible for service in this ministry, and advises the bishop on the suitability of an individual for service in this synodically authorized ministry.

The Synod Committee interviews and endorses persons at the beginning of their programme of preparation, monitors their progress as they complete their programme, interviews them at the end of their programme, and if satisfied, recommends them to the synodical bishop for certification to a Lay Ministry of the Word.

5. Programme of Preparation:

The programme of preparation is a *synodical* program leading to certification to a Lay Ministry of the Word shall normally include study in the following areas:

- a. Bible;
- b. Lutheran theology, polity, and the Lutheran Confessions;
- c. Homiletics;
- d. Worship;
- e. Leadership expectations and identity.

Upon completion of each component or course of preparation, individuals are expected to write a brief report to the Synod Committee outlining what they have learned.

6. Authorization for Service: Upon satisfactory completion of the programme of preparation an individual may be authorized for service. Such service shall fulfill assigned responsibilities and shall be for a specific period of time not to exceed two years and for a specific place.

Authorization for Lay Ministry of the Word shall be evidenced by an appropriate letter of appointment from the bishop that describes the terms and conditions of the authorization. The description may also limit or prohibit activities to be conducted.

A person authorized by the synodical bishop for Lay Ministry of the Word is installed in such service.

7. Supervision and Accountability: Lay Ministers of the Word serving in a congregational setting are directly responsible to the Congregation Council. Lay Ministers of the Word are supervised by an ordained minister appointed by the synodical bishop.

8. Renewal and Revocation: Renewal of authorization after two years is given only when a demonstrated need for its continuation remains. This need is determined by the synodical bishop at the request, and with the consent, of the community being served and in consultation with the supervising ordained minister. Authorization to provide such ministry may be revoked at any time by the synodical bishop, who need not specify the reason.

9. Other Matters:

- Persons authorized to serve in a Lay Ministry of the Word may only do so within the synod that has provided such authorization.
- A synod may consider authorizing an individual trained and authorized by another synod, based on the individual's qualifications and ability to meet the new synod's criteria for authorized ministry.
- Persons authorized for such ministries will not wear clerical garb (e.g., clerical collars or clerical stoles).
- The title "Pastor" is reserved for ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament and is not to be used by those authorized for Lay Ministry of the Word.
- Lay Ministers of the Word are not to offer pastoral counseling as a part of their ministries.

**Upon satisfactory completion of the programme of preparation, an individual may be certified as available for service within the synod. There is no guarantee of service within the synod and completion of a programme of preparation does not mean that authorization for service will necessarily follow. Persons may participate in a synodical programme of preparation to be enriched and equipped to serve within their congregations and in the world in the ministry of the baptized with no intention of becoming authorized.