

Cataloguing and Organizing Policies

Policies of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council will be organized according to the organizational “tree” that defines the essential structure of our life and work:



Polices governing **WORSHIP** will all begin with the capital letter **A**

Polices governing **STEWARDSHIP** will all begin with the capital letter **B**

Polices governing **MISSION** will all begin with the capital letter **C**

Polices governing **MINISTRY** will all begin with the capital letter **D**

- Under each of the four main policy groups an array of sub-categories may be constructed. The first sub-categories in each group will be labeled according to the pattern: **A.1, B.1, C.1, D.1.**
- Policy groups within each of these sub-categories will be labeled according to the pattern. **A.1.1, A.1.2, etc.** Specific policies in each of these areas would then be numbered sequentially: **A.1.1.1, A.1.1.2, etc.**
- *Polices more specific than this should be very carefully evaluated by the Synod Council on the basis of whether their specificity makes them inappropriately rigid and controlling.*

Components of Good Governance Policy

- Policy must be in compliance with ELCA constitutions and policies
- Policy must advance the organization toward its “global ends” (mission vision)
- Opening paragraph gives general description and purpose of the policy
- Define terms and ideas central to the policy
- Describe actions and activities governed by the policy
- Protocol for administering the policy (who is responsible?)
- Accountability

The Policy Category Tree

A – Policies governing Worship Practice

A.1 – Policies governing Worship Leadership

A.2 – Policies governing Worship Practice

B – Policies governing Stewardship

B.1 – Policies governing stewardship of finances

B.1.1 – Policies governing dedicated capital funds

B.1.2 – Policies governing fundraising

B.1.3 – Policies governing bequests

B.2 – Policies governing stewardship of human resources

B.2.1 – Policies governing synod officers

B.3 – Policies governing stewardship of real property

C – Policies governing MISSION

C.1 – Policies governing evangelical outreach

C.1.1 – Policies governing new communities

C.1.2 – Policies governing renewal of existing communities

C.1.3 – Policies governing culture or race-specific strategies

C.2 – Policies governing justice and advocacy

C.3 – Policies governing philanthropy and charity

D – Policies governing MINISTRY

D.1 – Policies governing non-rostered diaconal ministers

D.2 – Policies governing Synodically Authorized Ministers

D.3 – Policies governing Ecumenical Ministries

D.3.1 – Pastoral Leadership

Governance Policy for Pastoral Leadership in Congregations:
Adopted June 2011
Policy A.1.1.1

Although the bishop of the synod carries primary responsibility for the oversight of pastoral leadership in congregations, the Synod Council wishes to support this work with some key affirmations concerning pastoral leadership in the congregations of this synod:

- In general, the practice of Word and Sacrament ministry in this synod will conform as nearly as possible to the values and guidelines expressed in the document, *The Use of the Means of Grace (UMG)*, adopted by the ELCA in 1997, and the *ELCA Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA (MMR)*, latest edition.
- Although lay people are permitted to preach in our congregations, the responsibility for preaching rests with the called pastor(s) of the congregation (UMG, application 9B). In the event of a pastoral vacancy this responsibility belongs to the interim pastor or appointed vice pastor. Lay preachers must serve under the supervision of a pastor with the approval of the bishop.
- Ordained ministers, usually the called pastors of the congregation within which the baptism occurs, preside at baptisms (UMG, Principle 22). In the case of imminent death, a person may be baptized by any Christian (UMG Principle 23).
- In our congregations, ordained pastors preside in services of Holy Communion and proclaim the Great Thanksgiving (UMG Principle 40). There are only a few exceptions to this practice that are consistent with both UMG and MMR:
 - In an emergency situation, such as the illness or incapacity of the pastor for a worship service already planned, the bishop may authorize an appropriate lay leader from the congregation to preside at the table ON THAT OCCASION ONLY.
 - In the case of a culture-specific or language-specific ministry, when no ordained pastor with the necessary skills or experience can be found to serve the community, the bishop may authorize an appropriate lay leader to preside at the table for a period of three months. If the condition of inadequate leadership resources persists, the bishop may extend this permission in three-month increments provided that the leader enters into an appropriate leadership development process in consultation with the bishop.
 - In some cases, new and emerging communities may require initial leadership from a Synodically Authorized Minister. Guidelines for this special designation are found in policy D.2.1.1
 - In the event that an ordained minister cannot be found to serve as pastor or interim pastor for the congregation, the congregation may worship with lay leadership using a Service of the Word liturgy without Holy Communion or Baptism, provided that communion is celebrated with an ordained pastor presiding at least one Sunday each month.
 - As an extension of the Sunday worship, designated lay communion servers may take communion elements consecrated in public worship to those unable to attend.
 - The practice of private consecration of the elements or prior consecration of the elements by a pastor for distribution by a lay minister in public worship is not permitted.

- Ministers on the active rosters of Church bodies that are in full communion relationships with the ELCA may serve in pastoral leadership roles in our congregations under an “invitation to extended service” issued by the congregation with the approval of the bishop (MMR 8.72.12). For further clarification of those who qualify for this role, please see Governance Policy D.3.1.1
- A process for application for exceptions to this policy may be developed by the synod council.

Governance Policy for Synod Mission Grants to Congregations
Adopted September, 2012
Policy B.1.1.1

The Synod Council retains final authority for the use or distribution of capital funds entrusted to the synod as resources for the future mission endeavors of this synod.

From time to time, congregations, congregational partnerships, or other organizations make direct requests to the synod council for financial assistance grants to for projects or activities in which they are engaged. But the synod's capital mission reserves do not represent a charitable trust, or a philanthropic foundation whose purpose is to fund general social services no matter how worthy these endeavors may be. It is, therefore, necessary for the synod council to have a clear and consistent policy guideline for determining the eligibility of these requests.

Mission and Values

The mission of the Church is to call the world into a deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the way of the cross. This life-giving, life-changing, and life-saving relationship is the source and ending of the Church and our reason for existence. It is from this mission that all Christian vocation and all Christian action flows.

In order to achieve this end, God gives us *means of grace* – that is, instruments or tools to facilitate this relational mission. Primary means of grace are the Word and the Sacraments. Secondary means of grace include Christian community, acts of compassion and mercy, working for justice and peace, shared personal faith testimony by Christians, our time, our talent, our wealth, and our energy.

For baptized Christians, the very same instruments become the *gifts of grace*, freely and joyfully released back into the world as an expression of *Christian vocation*.

If congregations of this synod need financial assistance to increase and strengthen congregational capacity for the mission to call the world into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the way of the cross, it is the responsibility of the synod to do what it can to provide such assistance through grant application and award structures established by the synod council or the synod assembly. The strategic objective of these grants is growth in congregational evangelism, growth in congregational stewardship, and growth in shared congregational leadership

Mission activities that express one's Christian vocation, however, especially if there is no particular intent to call others into a relationship with Jesus Christ, will not ordinarily be funded from the mission reserves of the synod. Though we joyfully celebrate and commend activities and partnerships that invite Christians into broad-based community organizations, health initiatives, emergency relief efforts, food and clothing resources, social or mental health support services, cultural events, and the like, it is impossible for the synod to fund the infinite variety of Christian vocations. Also, it is inappropriate to value one vocation over another by selective funding.

Guiding Principles

1. Projects and activities that do not carry the explicit mission objective to call others into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ will not be funded by the synod's mission reserves.
2. Grants from mission reserves may be given only to congregations through application by the Congregation Council. The application will then be considered by an appropriate oversight committee.
3. In applying for grants, congregations must submit a mission plan with measurable outcomes related to the primary mission to call others into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Priority will be given to initiatives leading to growth in evangelism, growth in stewardship, and leadership development.
4. Congregations applying for grants must be or commit to becoming tithing partners in the overall mission of the synod and the ELCA.
5. Congregations receiving grants will not ordinarily be considered for additional grants until having submitted a summary of realized outcomes from the previous grant.

Governance Policy for the Synod Fund for Mission
Proposed January, 2018
Policy B.1.1.2

The Synod Council retains final authority for the use or distribution of capital funds entrusted to the synod as resources for the future mission endeavors of this synod.

In 1998 the Synod Council of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod established the Fund for Mission (FFM) as a special mission partnership endowment with the goal of growing a fund with a \$5,000,000 principle balance. Earnings from this fund are to be used as partnership grants to congregations needing advance funding for new mission initiatives designed to expand the size and impact of congregational mission.

This policy supersedes all previous versions of the governance policies for the Fund for Mission.

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Grants from the FFM are specifically designed as partnerships between the synod and its congregations. Reciprocity and accountability are, therefore, necessary conditions for these grants:

Guiding Principles

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4. Congregations applying for grants must be or commit to becoming tithing partners in the overall mission of the synod and the ELCA.
5. Congregations receiving grants will not ordinarily be considered for additional grants until having submitted a summary of realized outcomes from the previous grant.

Governance Policy for Fundraising by Primary Organizational Partners:
Adopted June 2011
Policy B.1.2.1

The Synod Council carries responsibility for giving or withholding permission to other organizations to conduct development and fundraising activities within congregations. Direct permission for fundraising resides with the local Congregation Council. Permission from the synod council merely allows organizations to approach congregations with a request to solicit contributions.

Due to changing conditions in the financial climate of the Church, many organizations and partners seek permission to approach congregations about building a donor relationship with the congregation or its members. For the council to act individually on each request may not be practical given the infrequency of synod council meetings.

The synod council regards some organizational relationships as Primary Organizational Partnerships. These partnerships are defined as:

- An agency, institution, or organization directly affiliated with the ELCA
- An agency, institution or organization perceived as a direct extension of the primary mission of the Church to bear witness to the love and power of Jesus Christ
- An agency, institution or organization designated by vote of the synod council as a Primary Organizational Partner

All other organizations seeking permission to approach congregations for fundraising activity must obtain that permission from the synod council on a case by case basis.

The list of approved Primary Organizational Partners, as of June 2011, shall be:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
- The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- Wartburg Theological Seminary
- Lutheran Campus Ministry of Illinois
- Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center
- Lutherdale Camp
- Bethel New Life
- Holy Family Ministries
- Concordia Place
- Refugee ONE (LIRS)

Governance Policy for Special Mission Bequests
Adopted, June 2013
Policy B.1.3.1

From time to time congregations and individuals may choose to leave bequests for special mission emphases within the life of the synod. Constitutionally, the stewardship of these designated gifts, like all bequests, falls to the Synod Council. However, in the case of gifts designated for the mission advancement of certain specific communities; such as, Latino Outreach, African Descent Outreach, Asian-American Outreach, Native-American Outreach, Arab-American Outreach, Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Outreach, GLBT Outreach, etc., it is imperative that leadership from the designated community play a central role in determining the appropriate use of the designated funds.

This policy is designed to protect and guide the use of these special mission bequests.

Guiding Principles

- All bequests given to the synod for designated special missions will be accounted for in synod financial reports as discreet accounts, clearly labeled with their designation, and subject to the annual audit of the synod. Such funds may not be used for any purpose beyond that designated by the donor.
- Special mission strategy teams will be appointed by the synod council to advise the synod council on appropriate strategic uses for these funds. Such strategy teams will function as council committees, accountable to report to the synod council all recommendations regarding the use of these funds. Mission Strategy Teams will not have direct independent authority to spend, to invest, or to withhold spending of the designated funds, but only to advise the synod council on these matters.
- It will be the normal practice of the synod council not to allocate or spend any of these designated mission funds without prior consultation with the appropriate strategy team. And having received such consultation, it will be the normal practice of the synod council to follow the advice of the appropriate strategy team.
- In the event of a dispute between the Mission Strategy Team and the synod council over the appropriate use of a designated special mission fund, the synod council will frame a specific resolution on the use of the fund for consideration at the next regular synod assembly.

Governing Policy for Distribution of Property Assets for Closing Congregations
Adopted, June 2013
B.3.1.1

The constitution of the ELCA (9.71.b) makes it clear that “title to the undisposed property of a congregation that ceases to exist shall pass to the synod of this church to which the congregation is related.” Congregations are born as the result of the generosity and mission commitment of the whole church. When that congregational mission concludes, it is just and faithful for those resources to become available for the birth and renewal of other congregational missions.

As a practical matter, however, congregations that are considering a decision to close often find the decision more hopeful and less painful if they know in advance how those resources will be used.

It shall therefore be the normal pattern of the synod to sell the undisposed real property of a closed congregation as soon as possible and to distribute the total cash assets, after incurred expenses, as follows:

- 10% Tithe: an undesignated gift to the Churchwide expression of the ELCA.
- 10% Capital Reserve: a reserve fund for extraordinary or unanticipated synod expenditures
- 10% Partner Grant: the closing congregation may designate this to one of our “Primary Organizational Partners”
- 30% Mission Reserve: cash grants for the start of new congregations or the renewal of existing congregations
- 40% Synod Fund for Mission: a perpetual endowment giving grants to congregations for projects that enrich or expand their congregational mission

In the event that the synod “Capital Reserve” exceeds 15% of the total annual synod budget, additional new cash will be placed in the “Mission Reserve.”

The synod staff will also be free to work with congregations on variations in this standard distribution. A congregation, for example, may request that a larger percentage of this capital be used to fund a particular new mission start or mission project that has already been approved by the synod council.

Closing congregations may also request that the “Mission Reserve” and “Partner Grant” portions of their legacy be designated for a particular mission focus; such as, Latino Outreach, African American Outreach, Asian-American Outreach, Companion Synod Partnership, etc.

No assets from closing congregations will be distributed to ministries other than the synod or its designated Primary Organizational Partners (see Governance Policy B.1.2.1).

Distributions other than the standard distribution must be:

1. Used toward a mission project previously approved by the synod council
2. Approved by an independent action of the synod council

Governance Policy for New Witnessing Communities:
Adopted June 2011
Policy C.1.1.1

Funds set aside by the Synod Council of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod for new mission development may be used for the initial development or “start-up costs” of New Witnessing Communities (NWC) that meet the following defining criteria:

- A New Witnessing Community is a word and sacrament gathering, meeting at a different place or time than an existing word and sacrament community, created for the purpose of extending or expanding the evangelical outreach of the Church.
- NWCs are initiated by some established expression of the Church (a congregation, a congregational partnership, a synod, or the churchwide organization structure).
- NWCs may or may not include members of existing congregations.
- Leaders of NWCs may be clergy or lay, professional, bi-vocational, or volunteer. Leaders who perform sacramental functions must be ordained ELCA clergy or duly authorized by the synod bishop as Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM). SAMs must comply with the terms of Governance Policy D.2.1.1
- Leaders of NWCs who are not called and ordained ELCA clergy must be supervised by the pastor and congregation council of the parent community
- NWCs will remain distinguishable from their parent community for at least one year. After one year or more of independent gatherings, a determination may be made for the sake of mission effectiveness as to whether the NWC should discontinue its existence, remain an independent community, or be reincorporated into the parent community.
- NWCs may be incorporated or remain an expression of an existing community. If not independently incorporated, only the parent corporation may call staff, hire staff, administer funds, or enter into contractual relationships.
- If independently incorporated, NWCs must have a constitution, bylaws, and governance structure consistent with the constitutions of the ELCA. They may or may not share staff; they may or may not share space; they may or may not enter into contracts apart from the parent corporation.

Funding grants for New Witnessing Communities are dependent upon:

- Completion of the synod’s *Mission Project Planner*, including a detailed description of a growth and self-reproduction strategy.
- Review and approval by the synod outreach team, the director of evangelical mission, and the synod bishop.
- Any project requiring a total grant of more than \$100,000 must be independently approved by the synod council. Prior to this approval, the director of evangelical mission will first explore the feasibility of a partnership grant from the churchwide organization.

Governance Policy for Synodically Authorized Ministers in Emergent Communities:
Adopted, June 2013
Policy D.2.1.1

The operating Mission Vision of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod is to “blanket the territory of the synod with Christian disciples, joyfully bearing witness to the love and power of Jesus Christ.” Living into this vision requires strengthening and renewing existing congregational communities and regularly creating new faith communities.

The fulfillment of this vision requires the development of a leadership culture that is self-reproducing and continually expanding outward into the world which means that leaders are not only going to come from the outside into communities, but are also going to rise up from within existing communities through an intentional process of apprentice leadership under the guidance of a local pastor and the synod staff.

When apprentice leaders reach a point of being ready to lead a free-standing faith community, a transition period may exist between the assumption of that leadership role and formal approval and ordination as a rostered pastor of the ELCA. During this transition period, the Bishop may nominate this leader to the synod council to be designated as a “Synodically Authorized Minister,” consistent with provisions of the *ELCA Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA (MMR)*, latest edition.

- Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM) must have received a positive entrance decision as candidates for ordination to Word and Sacrament ministry in the ELCA.
- SAMs must be participants in an intentional apprenticeship process under the guidance of a pastor trained in the Apprentice-Leader model, in direct partnership with the Synod Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM).
- SAMs may be authorized by the synod bishop, in consultation with the Synod Council, to preside at communion and preach in their designated faith community only.
- SAMs may be part time or full time but, except in rare cases, they should be part of the paid professional staff of the congregation they serve. Congregations will be the employer. If synod grants are part of the compensation structure for the position, those grants will be given by the synod to the employing congregation with an expectation of accountability from the congregation to use the funds for that purpose. If the congregation uses designated synod funds for some other purpose the grant will be immediately terminated.
- SAMs will, in addition to ongoing supervision with their guiding pastor, meet quarterly, under the direction of the Synod DEM, for mutual support and continuing education in ELCA mission leadership.
- SAMs will be expected to comply in life and work with the ELCA [Vision and Expectations for Ordained Ministers](#). If for any reason the bishop believes that the activity, behavior or teaching of the SAM is inconsistent with the leadership expectations of this Church, authorization may be immediately withdrawn at his/her sole discretion.
- Withdrawal from active participation in the candidacy process may bring an immediate withdrawal of SAM authorization from the bishop.

Governance Policy for Pastoral Leadership by Ecumenical Partners
Proposed July 22, 2017
Policy D.3.1.1

As the Metropolitan Chicago Synod moves more deeply into our full-communion ecumenical partnerships, we anticipate, with gratitude, more frequent interchanges of pastoral leadership among leaders professionally rostered with:

- a. The Episcopal Church, USA
- b. The United Methodist Church
- c. The Presbyterian Church, USA
- d. The United Church of Christ
- e. The Reformed Church in America
- f. The Moravian Church

This growth in ecumenical leadership exchange demands a clear policy and protocol for inviting such leaders into our congregations in a way that is consistent with provisions of the *ELCA Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA (MMR)*, latest edition, and that also serves to protect the integrity of our Lutheran witness and the well-being of congregational life.

- All candidates for appointment as Ecumenical Pastors must have a current letter of good standing as Ministers of Word and Sacrament within their own denomination and judicatory.
- All candidates for appointment as Ecumenical Pastors must complete a background check according to the current practices used by the synod for its officers, staff, and candidates for ministry.
- A member of the synod staff must make a personal reference call to the appropriate judicatory leader to evaluate the candidate with respect to our standard disclosures:

Has this person ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of illegal conduct or a crime, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of a driver's license?

Does this person have any addictive behavior, including a history of drug, alcohol, or pornographic addictions that might interfere with his/her ability to serve or continue serving as a rostered minister?

Has this person ever engaged in, been accused of, investigated for, sued, or charged with sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, substance abuse, child or spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?

Has this person ever engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known to the church, might seriously damage his/her ability to begin or continue in ministry?

The reference check should then be compared with a candidate self-disclosure on the same questions.

- Ecumenical Pastors may be part time or full time but, except in rare cases, they should be part of the paid professional staff of the congregation they serve. Congregations will be the employer. If synod grants are part of the compensation structure for the position, those grants will be given by the synod to the employing congregation with an expectation of accountability from the congregation to use the funds for that purpose. If the congregation uses designated synod funds for some other purpose the grant will be immediately terminated.
- Ecumenical Pastors will be expected to comply in life and work with the ELCA Vision and Expectations for Ordained Ministers. If for any reason the bishop believes that the activity, behavior or teaching of

the Ecumenical Pastor is inconsistent with the leadership expectations of this Church, authorization may be immediately withdrawn at the bishop's sole discretion.

- Ecumenical Pastors may serve as occasional pulpit supply pastors, as transition pastors under appointment by the bishop, or as pastors serving under a "letter of invitation to extended service," signed by the bishop and extended by the congregation in question.
- This policy applies ONLY to leaders on one of the specific denominational rosters listed at the beginning of this policy. Leaders from other Christian traditions can only serve under the conditions of Governance Policy D.2.1.1 dealing with Synodically Authorized Ministers.