



Metropolitan Chicago Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod Part-time Ministry Guidelines

OVERVIEW

A task force of the Leadership Team to the Southwestern Texas Synod created a report and recommendations concerning how to do ministry more effectively in the increasing number of congregations being served by pastors in less than full-time calls. Metropolitan Chicago Synod gives thanks for the work of the Southwestern Texas Synod and for the permission to adapt the report for the missional and contextual needs of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Shared-Time Ministry (from the ELCA Roster Manual)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America understands shared-time ministry to exist when an ordained minister is called to serve in one or more settings of this church while earning income from other employment or while devoting substantial time to other activities.

The ELCA defines ministry that is less than full-time to be “shared-time” (see above). However, we will use “part-time” throughout this document, because it provides more clarity as to the type of work we are describing, which is primarily that of a solo pastor or deacon in a ministry setting which is not large enough to support them in full-time ministry.

Approximately 50% of the congregations in our synod are now or will shortly be served by rostered leaders or synodically authorized ministers on a part-time basis. Congregations and their pastors and deacons are seeking guidance on how to structure their work and life together and how to compensate these leaders justly for the sake of the mission they share. This document applies specifically to rostered leaders with a focus on Word and Sacrament ministry, although many of the principles and guidance could also be used for consideration with synodically authorized ministers.

The expectations for pastors and deacons have changed in terms of the types of work they are now expected to do beyond worship leadership, visitation, and teaching. It is a challenge to both rostered leaders and congregations to strike a balance in terms of what they expect and what the pastor or deacon can realistically do in an average work week. It is a challenge for those who work in full-time ministry. It is even more of a challenge for those who have part-time calls. These challenges can also provide opportunities for more flexibility on the part of rostered leaders and the parish, and more growth in the lay leadership of the congregation.

This document is considered supplemental to the existing Metropolitan Chicago Synod Salary Guidelines.

PART-TIME MINISTRY WORK

Prioritizing Work – A Shared Responsibility

For congregations considering calling a part-time rostered leader, a conversation defining expectations is an essential part of the call process. These expectations and boundaries need to be stated and respected, the role of the pastor or deacon and congregation clearly defined

Congregational mission and ministry needs do not change when a rostered leader is called less than full-time. The shift that happens is regarding who takes responsibility for various tasks and aspects of mission and ministry. This conversation is essential and must happen in an open and honest way during the negotiating of the call process, and be revised along the way during the tenure of the rostered leader serving the congregation. This is particularly important if the pastor or deacon has been under full-time call and is shifting to part-time; what missional areas will be fulfilled by the laity rather than the pastor or deacon?

Expectations for the rostered leader's role within the ministry needs to be shaped around the skills the person brings and the percentage of time they are called. Part-time hours do not provide the same opportunity for ministry responsibilities as full-time; how will the congregation's mission be re-shaped accordingly?

Areas commonly considered the pastor's responsibility include:

- Hospital and shut-in visitation
- Funerals, weddings and baptisms
- Worship planning
- Confirmation or planning and teaching
- Faith Formation – Bible study, prayer group
- Preaching preparation
- Congregational meetings, administration and leadership support
- Synod committee meetings
- Communication – e-mails, social media
- Community engagement and networking

A professional who is contracting on a part-time basis must limit the scope of work they do in a particular job to make the expectations reasonable. In the case of parish pastors, the pastor and congregation will have to decide on what parts of a full-time pastor job the part-time pastor will not do, and what areas they will not have responsibility for and will be covered by lay leaders.

While in staff situations, a part-time pastor or deacon may be called to serve in a particular ministry that is by nature limited in scope (visitation, youth, education, for example). In a part-time solo pastor role (most common in new part-time calls), some things will either not be done in that parish, or will be done by lay staff or volunteers. Congregations thinking of calling a part-time pastor or deacon will have to choose the focus of their leadership position, which may be:

- Focus on community relations, outreach and evangelism
- Focus on weekly worship
- Focus on adult congregational programming (Bible study, Sunday school, etc.)
- Focus on youth and children's programming (Bible study, Sunday school, confirmation, etc.)
- Focus on visitation (sick and homebound members, hospital, etc.)
- Other focus

Models for Part-Time Ministry

As synod ministry includes more part-time pastors and deacons, it is helpful for congregations preparing to call a part-time rostered leader to have some models from which to draw as they shape this call.

A challenge for all part-time professionals is that professional positions are, by nature, not hourly, and not defined by hours: the professional is expected, within reasonable limits, to do the work needed regardless of the time taken. In exchange for what is usually more than normal full-time 40-hour work weeks, the professional has more flexibility in when to work those hours (several long days, an evening instead of a morning, etc.) than an hourly employee.

There is no accurate data about how many hours, on average, a full-time ELCA pastor or deacon works: some estimates range from 45 to 65. For the purposes of these recommendations, we will assume, as do other professional positions, that full-time is 40 hours per week, with the assumption that professionals will typically work 5-15 more hours per week. The 40 hours are somewhat regularly scheduled (see days of week discussion below), and the 5-15 additional hours are unscheduled, and as-needed. Regular hours are those often scheduled: office hours, Sunday and other worship service times, Bible studies, meetings, confirmation classes, etc. Unscheduled hours often include retreats, emergency visits, social media (Facebook, etc.), after hours calls and e-mails, etc. For our purposes, the following are approximate guidelines:

- Full-time = 40 hours per week “regular” hours + 5-15 additional unscheduled hours
- 3/4-time = 30 hours per week “regular” hours + 5-10 additional unscheduled hours
- 1/2-time = 20 hours per week “regular” hours + 5-7 additional unscheduled hours

Less than half-time, for the purposes of these recommendations, will be considered “contract” work and not covered under these “part-time” recommendations (usually meaning that “contract” positions will not be call situations).

Pastors and deacons often define their job not in hours, but in number of days worked per week. Any professional who is contracting on a part-time basis must limit the scope of work they do in a particular job to make the expectations reasonable. If a part-time pastor or deacon also has another job, there must be flexibility within the congregation to work around that second job.

Within these broad parameters, congregations and rostered leaders in part-time call processes have found several models useful.

Part-Time Model – 1: Hours worked weekly

The part-time pastor or deacon working in this model should receive the full-time number of Sundays off (vacation), which is often four Sundays per year. (Note: Otherwise part-time pastors will be working more Sundays than full-time pastors.) In addition to this, a part-time pastor will have more than one day completely off, when no work is expected. Additional Sundays off during the year should also be considered based on compensation, years of experience, continuing education, etc. Suggested are a minimum of 2-4 additional, non-vacation Sundays off during the year.

- 3/4 time: 30 hours per week work – 4 weeks of vacation including Sundays. Minimum of 2-4 additional Sunday’s off during the year.
- 1/2 time: 20 hours per week work – 4 weeks of vacation including Sundays (14 days of work) and Minimum of 2-4 additional Sundays off during the year.

Part-Time Model 2: Weeks (Including Sundays) Off Per Month

This model allows for a congregation to have a true picture of what part-time ministry looks like on a Sunday, and many pastors who have worked part-time consider a model that includes proportionate Sundays off the only fair model for pastors, who are otherwise simply expected to do a full-time job at a lower salary. The pastor would work full-time hours during the weeks not off.

- 3/4 time: 1 week (including Sunday) off per month will be off (plus 3 weeks of vacation).
- 1/2 time: 2 weeks (including Sundays) off per month will be off (plus 2 weeks of vacation).

Part-Time Model 3: Months Off Per Year

This model is a variation of Model 2. This model might make part-time ministry an attractive option (rather than just a lower paying option) for pastors who are parents of school-aged children or spouses of teachers/ school staff. This could involve either the summer months off, and/or January, for example. In this model, the pastor's vacation would be proportional as well (3/4-time pastors would have 3 weeks, 1/2-time pastors would have 2 weeks, etc.). The pastor or deacon would work full-time hours during the weeks not off.

- 3/4 time: 3 months (12 weeks, incl. Sundays) per year (plus 3 weeks vacation)
- 1/2 time: 6 months (24 weeks, incl. Sundays) per month (plus 2 weeks vacation)

Part-Time Model 4: Combination Models

Some pastors and deacons have chosen a compromise model between Model 1 and Models 2 and 3 in an effort to make the part-time position workable for the small congregation and also a benefit for the pastor.

The four broad models presented here should be part of the conversation between a call committee, council and pastor or deacon. No one model will work for every situation and each call is contextual: but congregations must be aware that calling a part-time pastor or deacon means a different model of ministry, with more lay leadership, in any size congregation or ministry situation. This all needs to be negotiated between the congregation leadership and the pastor, and then communicated continually with the congregation.

FAIR AND JUST COMPENSATION

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod Guidelines call for fair and just compensation for pastors and deacons, which should be comparable to other professionals in the local community of similar education and responsibilities in organizations that are not-for-profit, rendering a service to society and mission-driven. We affirm that for pastors in part-time calls, this should also be the case. The congregation should also pay for or provide for housing and a Social Security Tax Allowance.

More information on this can be found in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Compensation Guidelines.

Compensation

The Salary Guidelines for Rostered Leaders in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod are provided by the synod to assist in establishing appropriate salary packages. These guidelines are developed with awareness of both urban and suburban circumstances in our synod and of the other synods of Region 5. These synods are striving for uniformity in guidelines, although the dollar amounts may vary.

Guidelines for calculating cash salary, housing, and social security off-set are provided in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod guidelines.

An average hourly wage could be derived by taking an average full-time salary (defined compensation), dividing by an assumed 40-hour work week to get an hourly wage. This would be then be multiplied by the number of expected work hours to come up with a salary. The compensation could also be calculated as a percentage of the full-time defined compensation.

Benefits and Reimbursements

Some benefits are easily calculated by a straight percentage; others cannot be negotiated in the same way. Refer to Metropolitan Synod Salary Guidelines for more information regarding benefits.

Benefits are calculated based the defined compensation. Thus, they are not pro-rated or calculated by the percentage of call. Items such as continuing education, travel reimbursement, professional reimbursement should be compensated at synod guidelines. These are not pro-rated according to percentage of call.

Note: Health Care Coverage. Full coverage for pastor + family for insurance (as recommended by the ELCA). If a rostered leader is covered by a spouse/partner's insurance, a contribution should be made to a supplemental pension account in order to keep this benefit in the congregation spending plan and as a benefit for the rostered leader. Insurance costs may still exist even with waive of coverage and should be negotiated with the leader.

Vacation, Sabbatical, Family Leave, Disability and Sick Leave

These are defined in the Metropolitan Chicago Salary Guidelines. They are provided for in both full-time and part-time ministry calls.