



# Upstate New York Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

### **BISHOP'S EXPECTATIONS OF ROSTERED LEADERS**

The words of Scripture form the basis and intent of our liturgy for both the Ordination Rite as well as the Installation Rite of this church. As such they set forth expectations regarding the Office of Holy Ministry to which you've been called. I encourage leaders to read these from time to time as they are reminder of the calling to which we've been called.

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:21-23)

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

"I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

"Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called." (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of God that God obtained with the blood of God's own Son." (Acts 20:28)

"Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not under compulsion but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away." (1 Peter 5:2-4)

"Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

In both liturgical rites, questions are also asked that you answer with these words: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

Before almighty God, to whom you must give account, and in the presence of this assembly, I ask: Will you assume this office, believing that the church's call is God's call to the ministry of word and sacrament?

The church confesses that the holy scriptures are the word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran confessions as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the holy scriptures. Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and these creeds and confessions?

Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures and faithful in your use of the means of grace? Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with the word and sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

These scriptural references and questions lay solid footing for what I expect of you as a rostered leader in this synod. That may be translated to "A Lot!"

We are given a rare privilege, gift and opportunity to serve the church as called and ordained servants of the Word and with such comes accountability and expectations. Some of those are enunciated in the above paragraphs, others follow.

Attend to your Spiritual Life: Pray. Gather with others around the Word devotionally (not just in preparation for preaching), and find times to hear others preach as well as receive the Body and Blood of Christ. These things, along with others, help to ground you in the faith as well as build on it.

Attend to your all-around health. Find balance between work and play, servanthood and self-care. Take a minimum of one day off per week and use your allotted vacation time. Visit your doctor. Engage in continuing education. Cultivate a life outside the church. Develop hobbies. Make friends beyond the congregation. Be very intentional in creating time for your family. Pay attention to boundaries and talk to someone if you feel uncomfortable, uncertain or edgy. Consult with staff, mental health professionals or pastoral counselors as needed.

Pay attention to your personal and family finances. If you need help - ask! This is not a sin. Don't wait until you are over your head. Work on your own issues with money and its meaning in your life. Be a good financial steward. Percentage giving has been the best route for many of us. Grow in your giving – toward or beyond 10% and encourage others to do the same. (Luther's 3 conversions – head, heart and pocketbook)

Seek at least one place to serve beyond the local congregation. Sometimes it takes a while to find the right spot. This can be a community service, a conference, synod or even churchwide committee. (It also gets you out of town occasionally which helps to give you perspective.)

Find a pastor: Name a person as your pastor and inform the Conference Dean within three to six months. (If you are married your spouse should name someone other than you.) This is a person who will care for you, listen to you, pray with you, visit if you are sick and will keep the Bishop's Office informed if there is anything serious (like surgery). This person does not have to be a Lutheran or be ordained.



Gather with others: Attend Ministerium meetings, conference and synod assemblies as well as other gatherings of brothers and sisters for what Luther called “mutual conversation and consolation.” You are ordained or commissioned into the ministry of the whole church. Isolation puts you at risk. Take your continuing education time away at some events that involve others. Those who do not “get away” for this on a regular basis grow stale. (By the way: attendance at Synod Assembly is *not* optional. You must ask to be excused, if you cannot attend.)

Call upon the Synod Staff: The Bishop, Staff and Deans are pastors first and care deeply about you and your ministry. We are praying for you. It is helpful to keep us informed when anything significant is happening in your life, your family’s life or if you think something might explode in the congregation. The earlier you tell us, the more help we are likely to be. Sometimes there is nothing we can or should do, but even then we can pray for you.

One of the staff normally checks in with you and your leadership sometime after 6 months and before 1 year in your new setting. But if something can’t wait, call.

If you tell one of the synod staff something – you can assume that you are telling all of us on the staff. However, if you wish one of us to keep something to ourselves, we will honor that. If you hear something from one of my assistants, then you are hearing it from me.

Mutual Ministry Team. One of the most helpful pieces of the ministry puzzle that can be put in place is a well-grounded and formed Mutual Ministry Team. This works well in cases where congregational leadership and the pastor work together to select members that are agreeable to all involved. This should be formed within the first six months of the beginning of your ministry. The team should meet toward the end of the first year and put in place a method for evaluating both the pastor and the congregation in the shared ministry.

Representing the ELCA: You are a representative (and usually the only one) of the whole church in your congregation. Advocate for trust among the partners of the church (congregation, synod, Churchwide.) Speak well of your colleagues. Assume good or logical reasons for things. Don’t jump to conclusions. If you’re unhappy with someone or a decision, speak directly to those involved. Advocate for growth in mission support. When you speak as a pastor of the church, the church’s position takes precedence (whether or not you agree with it.) You may identify your own personal position, but it is important that you articulate the church’s position, especially if you are in a teaching role.

Completing basic reports : Keep your parish records up to date. Complete and return your parochial reports and annual report to the bishop as early as possible. These are important not just to your congregation, but to the whole church for research purposes.

Developing leaders: Look for and raise up potential leaders for the church for rostered and other ministries. If you can’t find “natural” leaders - grow them. Educate adults in the stories of faith and the mission of the church. The future of your congregation depends on the spiritual strength of its lay leadership. Discipleship is more important than membership.

Dealing with Change: Understand the dynamics of change and know that your arrival by itself brings great change to the congregation. You should know that the “right” way to do things changes frequently. Don’t get too far ahead of your folk. Be sensitive to the congregation’s history. Love them as you bring them along in new directions.



Trust God: God has gifted you for ministry. God will provide for your every need, though sometimes you will have trouble seeing it. Sometimes the people he provides will drive you crazy. Sometimes you will drive them crazy. Change will come in God's time. In the meantime - live together in God's love and know that God is with you and it is likely that you will be among those whose lives will be changed.

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. - Philippians 1:2-5*

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