

Stewardship in Rostered Leadership

For All Ministers of Word & Sacrament and Word & Service

(Pastors and Deacons)

The church recognizes that its rostered ministers are gifts from God and, like all such gifts, require careful stewardship. Such care is the responsibility of every expression of the church. This section discusses the ways in which the congregation cares for its rostered ministers, and promotes the careful stewardship of their energies and gifts. Such careful stewardship is intentional care not only of the rostered minister, but also of the congregation and the larger church. People grow best in their discipleship in healthy congregations, and are best served by healthy leaders.

HEALTHY LEADERS

The ELCA has long advocated for a careful stewardship of our rostered ministers' health and wholeness. A 2002 ELCA study on Ministerial Health and Wellness found that many rostered ministers are currently suffering from stress, overweight, high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol, much of which stems from their vocational responsibilities. These unhealthy conditions not only reduce their effectiveness and quality of life, but also contribute directly to the rising cost of the congregation's cost for healthcare benefits. Rostered and congregation lay leaders are encouraged to work together to identify methods of safeguarding and improving the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual health and well-being of their rostered ministers. Such a discussion should define specific and mutually beneficial practices that respect a rostered minister's personal time, establish reasonable work schedules, and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Visit the Portico Benefit Services website (<https://www.porticobenefits.org/PorticoBenefits/CallToLiveWell.aspx>) for further suggestions in this effort.

Additionally, congregations are encouraged to promote self-care to ensure healthy congregations and healthy leaders. It is recommended that congregations offer partial reimbursement for health/exercise membership fees. **Rostered ministers, who receive Portico Health benefits, are requested to participate in the Annual Health Assessment survey.** Participation in the survey should provide personal well-being and will help to reduce the cost of these benefits.

WORK WEEK

It often seems that the work of ministry is never done and that there are never enough hours in the week. However, Rostered Ministers, like anyone else, need time off from work to replenish and re-energize. **Rostered ministers should have two full days off per week.** These days off should be granted and encouraged to be free from ministry-related responsibilities. **For the well-being of the rostered minister and health of the congregation, rostered ministers should not schedule work that exceed 50 hours in a single work week.** The rostered minister's schedule (days/hours) may be negotiated as necessary.

HOLIDAYS

The responsibilities of rostered ministers often means that they are unable to take advantage of the three-day weekends and other holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, that most other people are able to observe. It is recommended, therefore, that the nine to eleven holidays observed by the general public, plus three floating personal days, should be designated as observed holidays by the congregation. Considerations should then be given, and rostered ministers should be encouraged, to take these days off at another time during the week whenever they cannot be observed because of pastoral responsibilities.

VACATION

A minimum of four weeks of paid *Vacation* (including four Sundays) per year is recommended. Additional vacation time may be considered.

HEALTH AND FAMILY LEAVE

Rostered Ministers shall be provided with up to six work-weeks of paid leave, per year, with full salary and benefits for any of the following reasons:

- For the birth of a child, and to care for the newborn child,
- For the adoption of a child, and to care for the newly adopted child,
- For the care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition, and
- For a personal serious health condition in which the rostered minister is unable to work,
- Bereavement Leave to grieve and heal from the loss of a family member.*

*It is recommended that Rostered Ministers take one week to ten days, per incident.

CHURCHWIDE AND OTHER COMMITMENTS

It is important to remember that Rostered Ministers are called by and to the whole church for service in both the church and in the world; this is the connectional nature of our church, serving together. Rostered Ministers may be called to serve in ways that take them beyond the congregation. Examples may include church-related activities such as serving as a Bible study leader or chaplain at a church camp, or on a synodical or ELCA committee or task force. In any case, this “extended ministry” should be carefully and prayerfully considered with the congregation council so that these duties do not disrupt the care for the congregation. This time should be regarded as an extension of the congregation's ministry and should not be considered as vacation time.

Additional responsibilities outside the congregation may include, National Guard/Reserve duty, or a teaching assignment at a college or seminary, are not seen as an extension of the congregational ministry, but a personal responsibility of the rostered minister. These responsibilities are often not negotiable in time and scope. The rostered minister and the ministry setting will need to address these in a case-by-case basis to ensure that leadership and pastoral care coverage is available during these times.