

Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

Part-Time Ministry Guidelines

Prepared by the RMS Congregational Ministries Board and
The Part-Time Ministry Steering Team
Adopted by Synod Council, May 2, 2019



Rocky Mountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Purpose of This Document	3
Disclaimer	3
Introduction	3
ELCA Definition of “Shared-Time Ministry”	3
Definitions	4
Background	4
Discernment and Call	5
Questions for Consideration and Discussion	5
Models for Part-Time Ministry Work	6
Responsibilities of Ministers in the ELCA	6
Prioritizing Responsibilities	6
Considering Models for Part-Time Ministry in a Congregational Setting	7
Model 1: More Days Off Per Week	7
Model 2: More Weeks (Including Sundays) Off Per Month	7
Model 3: Months Off Per Year	8
Questions for Consideration and Discussion	8
Just Compensation	9
Salary and Housing	9
Pension and Healthcare Benefits	9
Expense Reimbursement	9
Travel Expense	9
Professional Expense	10
Renewal and Self-Care	10
Vacation and Days Off	10
Sabbatical Leave	10
Compensatory (“Comp”) Time	10
Continuing Education	10
Synodical Events	11

Questions for Consideration and Discussion	11
Other Issues	11
The Importance of Lay Leadership	11
Thinking about the Eucharist	12
Finding Support in Full Communion Partners	12
Conclusion	13
Appendices	13
Appendix A: <i>ELCA Definition of Shared-Time Ministries</i>	13
Appendix B: <i>Graphs and Visual Models of Part-Time Ministry in a Congregation</i>	16
Appendix C: <i>The Supply of and Demand for Clergy in the ELCA</i>	18

OVERVIEW

Purpose of This Document

This document provides congregations and rostered ministers with important topics of consideration regarding part-time ministry. An increasing number of congregations and rostered ministers are considering part-time ministry, and this has led to an increase of inquiries as to how ministry can be done most effectively in this scenario. This document, then, covers a wide array of issues that ought to be discussed, negotiated and agreed upon when entering into a call process for a part-time position, including prioritizing responsibilities, models of part-time ministry, and just compensation.

The Rocky Mountain Synod has provided this document as a guide and resource. Because each ministry context is different, and the ministry needs of each congregation will vary, we hope this document will encourage comprehensive, thoughtful discussion among all parties involved towards the goal of establishing and sustaining effective part-time ministry.

Disclaimer

Information in this document does not constitute legal advice to anyone. In addition, the use of this document does not create an attorney-client relationship of any sort. Individuals requiring legal assistance should engage a qualified attorney, licensed to practice law in the particular state or jurisdiction where the legal issues have arisen. Members of the ELCA, rostered ministers, congregations, synods, and others affiliated with this church should always consult their own attorneys, accountants, or similar professionals whenever legal issues or problems arise. Neither the churchwide organization, the Rocky Mountain Synod nor the general counsel is responsible for any loss, injury, liability, or damage related to your use of this document, whether from errors or omissions in the content of this document.

INTRODUCTION

ELCA Definition of “Shared-Time Ministry”

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America defines ministry that is less than full-time to be “shared-time.” (For a full description, definition and explanation of shared-time ministry in the ELCA, see *Appendix A*.) Briefly, the concept of shared-time ministry covers a wide range of settings and contexts, however. Some examples include:

- *Small-membership congregations* with significant opportunities for mission and service.
- *New ministries* so limited in size or slow in development that they would require a disproportionate and unwise investment of time and money, if the more typical mission-development approach were employed.

- *Ministries (e.g., inner city, ethnic, and rural)* where the community's expectation is that the rostered minister will receive primary financial support from secular employment.
- *Multi-staff congregations* looking for ministry specialties, in addition to the services of rostered ministers and contracted laypersons.
- *Parishes that would benefit from having two or more individuals serving a single congregation or multiple congregations* but that cannot afford full-time salaries for several individuals.
- *Specialized pastoral or ministry needs* of institutions and agencies that may call for a high degree of training and skill but that may neither warrant investment of appropriate full-time salary nor justify the engagement of a full-time staff person in that position.

Because of the broad definition of “shared-time ministry” in the ELCA, we have opted to use the term “part-time” throughout this document because it more narrowly defines the type of work we are describing.

Definitions

Throughout this document, some terms will be used that may not be familiar, and others may be defined narrowly for the purposes of this document.

Minister of Word and Sacrament – In the ELCA, Ministers of Word and Sacrament are Pastors.

Minister of Word and Service – In the ELCA, Ministers of Word and Service are Deacons.

Specialized Ministry – Although *all* ministries can be understood as specialized, here we are referring specifically to non-congregational ministry settings (e.g., hospitals, prisons, military, etc.).

Background

In March 2016, the ELCA published a report entitled *The Supply of and Demand for Clergy in the ELCA* (see *Appendix B* for the full report), which details many statistics that have led to many congregations in the ELCA to consider alternatives to a full-time solo pastor, and looks to a future where many more congregations will need to consider those alternatives as well. “With congregational income decreasing, more and more congregations are pressed to afford a pastor. Most congregations prefer to call a full-time pastor who can devote his/her time solely to that congregation,” write the authors Adam DeHoek and Kenneth Inskeep. But the financial commitment needed to fulfill those preferences are becoming harder and harder to sustain for many congregations. The report concludes that in 2019, approximately 2,000 congregations in the ELCA will not be able to afford a first-call, full-time pastor. These congregations will need to pursue other alternatives for pastoral ministry, either in the form of a single pastor shared among two or more congregations, relying on supply pastors, or calling a single part-time rostered minister, to name just a few options.

Additionally, we would be mistaken to conclude that financial considerations are the only factors at play when considering part-time ministry. It is entirely possible that a congregation could discern that calling a rostered minister less than full-time is desirable, especially if the lay leadership of the congregation is well trained and equipped. And as the landscape of the church changes, there may be more rostered minister who genuinely discern a call to part-time ministry not as a last resort, but as a way to extend their calling in the world beyond the church as well.

It is becoming more and more clear that the Rocky Mountain Synod will see an increase in congregations investigating and perhaps choosing to call a rostered minister less than full-time in the near future. Congregations and rostered ministers, therefore, are understandably seeking guidance on how to structure their work and life together and how to compensate these leaders justly and adequately.

Discernment and Call

The process by which an rostered minister is called to a particular expression of the church is through discernment. Discernment is the dynamic process by which individuals and congregations, as well as synod councils and those in specialized ministry, work together seek to discover God's will. It is through discernment that a congregation or synod council may decide which qualities are most needed in a minister for a particular context. Similarly, it is through discernment that a minister will determine where God is leading them to be able to put their specific gifts and talents to use for the sake of the world. The process of calling a minister within the life of the church is therefore primarily about discerning God's will for and God's call upon the congregation or ministry in which they will serve. Prayerfully, the church calls forth those they believe God can best use to help them carry out their mission together.

A "calling," therefore, formally recognizes the mutuality that exists between the minister being called and the congregation or agency issuing the call. Whether a rostered minister is called into full-time or part-time ministry, this expectation of faithful discernment and a mutual calling should be honored.

Questions for Consideration and Discussion

- If you have not done so already, spend some time to briefly describe the context of your congregation or ministry setting. Some examples include: What is your average worship attendance? Or how many people do you serve in your setting? How would you describe the setting (e.g., urban, rural, small city, non-profit agency, missional field site, etc.)? What is your congregation passionate about? What does your congregation or ministry setting expect of a rostered minister? Deliberating on these questions now – among many others – will be helpful before you move through the rest of this document. (Note for congregational contexts: This step often done as a component of your congregation's call process, and is formalized in a section of your Ministry Site Profile.)
- What emotions arise as you read through the report *The Supply of and Demand for Clergy in the ELCA*? Why? How does this document inform your understanding of the need for shared- or part-time ministry in the ELCA?
- What do you believe to be at the core of your context's mission and vision? In what way will calling a part-time rostered minister to your congregation or ministry site help fulfill this mission and vision?

MODELS FOR PART-TIME MINISTRY WORK

Responsibilities of Ministers in the ELCA

There are many responsibilities that are expected of rostered ministers in the ELCA. Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the ELCA lists several of them for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service. Just some of the expectations include: preaching; teaching; conducting worship; nurturing faith; providing pastoral care; bringing healing; advocating dignity and justice; speaking publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed; and equipping people for lives of witness and service within and beyond a congregational setting. While this gives a broad picture of the scope of responsibilities assumed of a rostered minister, it neglects to mention the other, often unseen tasks that a rostered minister may assume, including: worship planning, sermon preparation, Confirmation and Faith Formation planning. These preparatory tasks for worship and education consume many more hours a week than the actual event itself. Even the task of correspondence – either via email, or phone, or social media – can consume several hours of time per week.

However, the ministry needs of a congregation or ministry setting and the rostered minister do not change when a rostered minister is called less than full-time. Therefore, it is imperative when calling a part-time rostered minister that an open and honest conversation take place regarding the scope of responsibilities for the rostered minister, and which areas of ministry and mission might need to be fulfilled by the laity, if possible.

Expectations of the rostered minister's role within the ministry ought to be shaped around the gifts the person brings and the percentage of time she or he is called.

Prioritizing Responsibilities

Ministry settings or Synod Councils thinking of calling a part-time rostered minister may consider choosing a primary focus for a part-time rostered minister, 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.);
- Focus on advocacy and justice;
- Focus on stewardship of time, talents and resources;
- Focus on health and wellness;
- Other focus.

One of these could be chosen as a primary focus for the part-time rostered minister, and one or two as secondary foci, which can be attended to if time permits. Obviously, secondary areas will need solid lay leadership to assist the rostered minister. Other areas may not be done at all in that ministry setting, or done in conjunction with another local ministry. Prioritizing which areas of ministry are most important within a

congregation or specialized ministry context will be a crucial exercise for congregations and synod councils preparing in part-time calls.

Considering Models for Part-Time Ministry in a Congregational Setting

One of the challenges when moving to a part-time ministry model – both for the congregation and for the rostered minister – is to determine how best to set up and maintain the schedule of the rostered minister. What that schedule looks like will vary widely from ministry to ministry because one size does not fit all when it comes to part-time ministry. A number of factors will play into the model that a particular ministry setting may choose including: the demographics; the local context; anticipated working hours per week; primary and secondary areas of focus; whether or not the part-time rostered minister has another job; and so on.

Therefore, we offer the following models as useful tools for thinking about how to construct a part-time ministry call. While the following models are written specifically for congregational settings, the larger ideas contained within them may generate ideas for how to negotiate a realistic schedule for any ministry setting. Also note that this is not an exhaustive list of ways that part-time ministry may be set up, but we hope that they may give you some ideas of what might make most sense in your own context. For those who would like a visual representation of these various models, refer to Appendix B: “Graphs and Visual Models of Part-Time Ministry in a Congregation.”

Regardless of the model negotiated, the expectations and boundaries need to be overtly respected, the role of the rostered minister and ministry setting clearly defined, and an emergency plan – for when the rostered minister is not available – established and broadly understood. This emergency plan could include arrangements with retired rostered minister, neighboring clergy, lay staff or other leaders. (See the section entitled “Other Issues” below for more discussion of relevant issues that may affect the model of part-time ministry that is chosen.)

Model 1: More Days Off Per Week

From the data collected, this is currently the most common part-time model. The part-time rostered minister working in this model would receive the full-time number of vacation Sundays, which is often four Sundays per year. (Otherwise, part-time rostered ministers would work more Sundays than full-time rostered ministers.) In addition to this, a part-time rostered minister will have more than one day a week completely off, when no work is expected. (Most full-time rostered ministers work 6 days a week, usually taking Friday or Monday off.) Exactly how many days off a part-time rostered minister receives depends on the total weekly expectation of hours and the way that the rostered minister divides those hours throughout the week. For a rostered minister working 30 hours per week, two days off per week may suffice. For a rostered minister working 20 hours per week, three or four days off may be a better fit.

Model 2: More Weeks (Including Sundays) Off Per Month

One part-time pastor interviewed in preparation for this document said that this model worked best for her. “The congregation had a better appreciation for the implications of calling a part-time pastor. Having two Sundays

off per month only seemed fair. Otherwise, it felt like I was expected to do a full-time job at a lower salary.” This model, then, gives the part-time rostered minister the benefit of being able to have some full weekends off. The congregation choosing this model would need to plan well in advance how they intend to supply pastoral leadership on Sundays when the called rostered minister is absent. This may include arrangements with other local or retired clergy, or a lay led worship service. A conversation regarding the number of vacation Sundays per year would be crucial to negotiating this model. Perhaps a rostered minister serving 30 hours per week would receive only three vacation Sundays per year instead of four; or a rostered minister serving 20 hours per week receives only two vacation Sundays per year.

Model 3: Months Off Per Year

This model might be a good option for rostered minister who are parents of school-aged children, or spouses of teachers. In this model, a rostered minister might take a whole summer off, for example, to coincide with summer break; while for the rest of the year, the rostered minister would work full-time. As with Model 2, congregations would need to organize and plan for worship and pastoral leadership during those months when the called rostered minister is away. Also, as with Model 2, a conversation regarding vacation time will be critical. Perhaps a rostered minister working full-time for nine months of the year would receive three weeks (including Sundays) of vacation per year. While perhaps a rostered minister working full-time for six months of the year would receive two weeks (including Sundays) of vacation per year.

Ministries and rostered ministers may find that some combination of these models may work best for them in their context. Regardless of the model(s) used, clear, open, honest communication during the call process will be imperative to negotiating a part-time ministry schedule that will work best for all involved.

Questions for Consideration and Discussion

1. Make a physical list of all of the areas of responsibility that you feel your ministry is well-equipped to take on yourself; what are the areas of responsibility that you would need a rostered minister to focus on; and what are areas of ministry that you are willing to let go of for now. Realistically, how many hours would it take for a rostered minister to do these areas? You might find it helpful to ask one or several rostered minister for their opinions.
2. In order to prioritize responsibilities, it may be helpful to establish a team/committee to study the operations of the ministry setting. Who does what? What structures and supports are in place, i.e. schedules, calendars, meetings, ministry teams etc. How is the day to day operation of the ministry managed? If there are full-time and part-time staff members, what is their time allocated to? Are they able to accomplish their jobs in the time allocated? What is the structure for acquiring, equipping and retaining volunteers? Are there specific job descriptions for staff members and volunteers? How will you tailor the call documents to clearly define the responsibilities of the part-time rostered minister?
3. Is there a particular role and/or set of responsibilities that are needed in order to accomplish the church’s mission and vision?
4. Once priorities and responsibilities are outlined, then a discussion of possible models of part-time ministry can be explored. Taking into consideration the congregation’s discernment of the call and the role and responsibilities needed, identify several models that could work for your ministry setting. Using

a decision-making process consider the pros and cons of the models proposed taking into consideration the structures and support your ministry site has in place or intends to implement for both existing staff positions and the new staff position.

JUST COMPENSATION

An honest discussion about fair and just compensation naturally follows discussions around responsibilities and schedules. The following areas of compensation may not be applicable to all rostered leaders, especially those who are serving in contexts other than a congregation (e.g., hospital, prison, school, other non-profit, etc.); and it is hoped that ministries will make every effort to meet recommended guidelines of the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Salary and Housing

The Rocky Mountain Synod Compensation Guidelines and the accompanying Worksheets (one for “Pastors” and one for “Deacons”) can be found at <https://www.rmselca.org/compensation>. The Compensation Guidelines document is helpful to read and work through to begin to understand some of the complex issues involved in determining a fair and just compensation for rostered ministers. Note that while you are working through the Worksheet, you will have to adjust the Baseline Compensation number to account for the appropriate part-time status. The congregation should also pay for or provide for housing and a Social Security Tax Allowance for Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Pension and Healthcare Benefits

Some benefits for part-time rostered ministers are easily calculated by calculating a straight percentage of benefits as compared to a full-time rostered minister; others will need to be negotiated differently. For example, determining the dollar amount for pension contributions through Portico’s ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program is easily calculated once a percentage of contribution is determined (at least 10%). A contribution calculator can be found at <https://porticobenefits.org>. However, negotiating full healthcare coverage for a rostered minister and his or her family as recommended by the ELCA might not be as straightforward. If a leader is covered by a spouse / partner’s insurance, a contribution could 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 minister.

Expense Reimbursement

Travel Expense

Full mileage allowance according to current IRS guidelines (<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>) should be paid to the rostered minister for all travel expenses over and above transportation to and from the office.

Professional Expense

Routine expenses such as the purchase and care of robes and stoles, magazines, books and other professional expenses should be expected. Negotiating an annual limit on such expenses may be agreed to each year.

Renewal and Self-Care

Vacation and Days Off

Vacation time and regular days off are important for rostered ministers to maintain their emotional health, to tend to relationships with their families and friends, and for rest. This time off and vacation are just as important for part-time rostered ministers as for those working full-time. Negotiating the details for this time away from work is an important part of the call process for a part-time rostered minister. Different models can include modification of the number of days off and/or the number of Sundays included in vacation time. See the section above entitled “Considering Models for Part-Time Ministry” for a further discussion of this topic. (Note: This criteria for vacation and days off may not be applicable to those in specialized ministry sites.)

Sabbatical Leave

The Rocky Mountain Synod website wisely notes that “a sabbatical offers opportunity to get off the treadmill and provides an opportunity for renewal of vision and hope. It’s more than just a chance to recharge your batteries for another year. It can be a life and soul-changing time, a time when perspective and the Holy Spirit can come together.” Historically, sabbaticals have been offered to full-time clergy and lay-rostered ministers. However, given the changing landscape of the church and its leadership needs, a conversation about a sabbatical policy for *all* ministries and ministers would be wise. As the models of ministry show above, the reality is that part-time ministers do bear many if not all of the same stresses that their full-time colleagues do. Offering some way of rest and renewal may be appropriate, although proper planning will be necessary. (Note: This may not be applicable to those in specialized ministry sites.)

Compensatory (“Comp”) Time

Part-time rostered ministers can sometimes find themselves in situations where it is necessary to work more hours than their call states. This might especially be the case during overnight events such as Confirmation Camp, or during Holy Week or Christmas when rostered ministers are expected to lead several worship services in a one-week timeframe. It can be mutually beneficial to offer comp time for these extraordinary hours. An example might be providing one day of comp time for every day spent at Confirmation Camp. Other arrangements can be agreed upon from year to year. (Note: This may not be applicable to those in specialized ministry sites.)

Continuing Education

Rostered ministers on part-time salaries may have less of their own money to spend on continuing education, but still need continuing education as full-time leaders do. The ELCA recommends a minimum of \$700 per year, and preferably \$1,000 per year, be offered toward continuing education for a full-time rostered minister. Congregations and rostered ministers should be attentive to this as they negotiate the compensation package.

Synodical Events

The congregation should provide full allowance for synodical events, such as Synod Assembly and Theological Conference, which all rostered ministers are expected to attend. Time and money for synodical events does not count against continuing education allowance or vacation. It is part of the ministry to the wider church which is part of the call. The congregation and / or rostered minister (even in specialized ministry contexts) can apply for travel assistance and/or scholarships as necessary through the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Questions for Consideration and Discussion

1. Has your congregation leadership had conversations about areas of compensation and time allotment that are not just monetarily based?
2. How will your congregation handle pastoral absences for vacation time, time for renewal and continuing education? What resources are available to you to use (i.e. retired rostered minister in the area, etc.)? What other plans can you develop for these contingencies? Who will do this and when will you complete this plan?

OTHER ISSUES

The Importance of Lay Leadership

Healthy, vibrant congregations rely on participation and leadership from many people. This is the case for all congregations – large or small; rural and urban; youthful and aging; those with a large pastoral staff and those with only one part-time rostered minister. Yet the need for lay leadership is perhaps more evident in congregations who call a solo part-time rostered minister. As discussed in sections above, the responsibilities and duties entrusted to rostered minister are broad, including everything from presiding over worship services, to visiting the sick and homebound, to communications, to participation in Council and committee meetings, to leading Bible studies. Additionally, in some congregations with no other staff, the rostered minister may be called upon to prepare weekly worship bulletins, monthly newsletters, or assist with the maintenance of the church facility. Therefore, in light of the expansive ministry needs of any congregation, lay leadership development and training is crucial.

Martin Luther championed the idea of the Priesthood of All Believers – a concept that was as helpful in his time as it is in our own. In the 1500s, the priesthood was long seen to be a prestigious vocation. The popular view was that priests – by virtue of their calling – were somehow holier and closer to God than the average peasant. Farmers, metalworkers, bakers, homemakers, teachers – these were all seen as menial vocations by comparison. Martin Luther balked at this idea and argued, instead, that *all* people are called to a vocation in service to God and neighbor. This means that the plumber is just as valuable in God's economy as the doctor, or the lawyer, or the priest. Through the waters of baptism, all have been endowed and empowered to use the gifts they have in service to their neighbor.

Similarly, in today's church, there continues to be some belief on the part of some that rostered minister are set apart in some way to do the work of the church. And – admittedly – some rostered minister play into this belief. Yet this neglects the need and importance for *all* believers to share in the work of ministry as their gifts enable them.

To that end, Lay Leadership development and training is seen as an urgent and growing need to support healthy, vibrant congregations in the Rocky Mountain Synod. Leadership courses are becoming more widely available to assist congregation members in this development. For more information on where and how these courses may be offered, please contact the Office of the Bishop.

Thinking about the Eucharist

As more congregations are seeking leadership from part-time rostered minister, one of the challenging issues that will arise is how the sacraments will be administered. Presiding at the sacrament of the table has historically been the exclusive responsibility and privilege of the pastor – a Minister of Word *and Sacrament* – in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless special dispensation has been granted to a layperson by a synodical bishop. At the same time, it has become increasingly common for ELCA congregations to celebrate the Eucharist weekly.

For congregations considering a part-time rostered minister, these two dynamics may present a challenge. How would a congregation maintain their practice of weekly communion in the absence of their called rostered minister? Several options may be available to congregations who find themselves in this situation. Perhaps the easiest option is to utilize a retired rostered minister in the congregation or in the local area. A list of supply rostered minister and presiders sorted by geographical area is located on the Rocky Mountain Synod website. A second option is to find help from full communion partner churches and/or rostered minister in the area. (See below for an explanation about Full Communion Partnerships.) Finally, if a congregation is having difficulty arranging for a presiding minister to officiate at the sacraments, the congregation may request special dispensation from the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod for a layperson to preside.

As of the time of this publication, the Rocky Mountain Synod is reviewing the need for additional and more widespread Lay Eucharistic ministers. This is a growing need for many congregations around the Synod, certainly in more rural areas and especially among congregations with Part-Time Ministers.

Finding Support in Full Communion Partners

The ELCA celebrates the rich diversity of the Body of Christ. As an expression of that appreciation, the ELCA has taken great strides to form relationships with other denominational church bodies in the United States. Through a prayer-filled process of dialogue, relationship-building, and sometimes healing between the ELCA and other church bodies, the two parties may forge a new relationship known as Full Communion Partners. This does not mean the two denominations merge; rather, in reaching agreements, denominations also respect differences.

At the time of this writing, the ELCA has entered into Full Communion Partnerships with six other church bodies in the United States: the Presbyterian Church – USA (1997); the Reformed Church in America (1997);

the United Church of Christ (1997); the Episcopal Church (1999); the Moravian Church (1999); and the United Methodist Church (2009).

Developing relationships with local Full Communion Partners may prove to be particularly beneficial for congregations with a part-time rostered minister. Because a mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's Supper, and mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all are just a few of the characteristics of a full communion partnership, ELCA congregations may find help and support from these partners in ministry. Whether for supply preaching, celebrating the sacraments, pastoral counseling, or pastoral visitation, clergy from these full communion partners may be helpful resources, particularly when the called part-time rostered minister is taking a time off or using vacation time.

CONCLUSION

Ministry in a part-time setting can be a blessing to both the rostered minister and the congregation as well as those individuals called by synods into specialized ministry. Being very clear about these issues and topics will go a long way to ensuring a healthy, productive and mutually beneficial relationship between the rostered minister and the people she or he serves.

One final note: as this document was being prepared, a gathering of part-time ministers of the Rocky Mountain Synod was convened. The purpose was to reflect on the gifts and challenges that part-time ministers and ministries face. One of the most helpful results of that meeting was a reframing of part-time ministry. The ministers felt that that moniker could lead to feelings of shame or regret on behalf of the ministry they served. The people issuing the call to a part-time minister may have felt as though they were “less-than” simply because they couldn’t afford to call a full-time minister. The rostered ministers, however, saw value in their part-time role because it opened the eyes of those involved in their respective ministries to become more involved in lay leadership roles. In reflection, then, it may be most helpful to think of this not as “part-time ministry,” but “shared-leadership ministry.” This is the way that Christ’s church works best, after all; using the gifts and skills of *all* members of the body to proclaim and embody God’s unconditional love for the sake of the world.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: *ELCA Definition of Shared-Time Ministries*

The following is excerpted from pages 21-22 of the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as adopted March 31, 2017, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The full document may be found at http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies_Procedures_Roster_Mgmt.pdf.

c. Shared-time ministries

7.41.1. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

A. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A 16. ...

1) Definition of shared-time ministry

The ELCA understands shared-time ministry to exist when a rostered 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. Some examples of contexts and settings for which shared-time ministries may be appropriate are:

- *Small-membership congregations* with significant opportunities for mission and service.
- *New ministries* so limited in size or slow in development that they would require a disproportionate and unwise investment of time and money, if the more typical mission-development approach were employed.
- *Ministries (e.g., inner city, ethnic, and rural)* where the community's expectation is that the rostered minister will receive primary financial support from secular employment.
- *Multi-staff congregations* looking for ministry specialties, in addition to the services of rostered ministers and contracted laypersons.
- *Parishes that would benefit from having two or more individuals serving a single congregation or multiple congregations* but that cannot afford full-time salaries for several individuals.
- *Specialized pastoral or ministry needs* of institutions and agencies that may call for a high degree of training and skill but that may neither warrant investment of appropriate full-time salary nor justify the engagement of a full-time staff person in that position.

2) Criteria for shared-time ministry

- a) Individuals eligible for shared-time ministry must be on the roster of this church or have been recently approved for initial call. Initial calls to Ministry of Word and Sacrament normally are in a congregational setting.
- b) Experienced individuals, whose ability to work in complex settings has already been tested, are preferred.
- c) A minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in shared-time ministry shall have a significant responsibility for a ministry of Word and Sacrament in a congregation, institution, or other expression of this church (churchwide bylaws 7.41.01. and 7.41.03.).
- d) A rostered minister may be under call to only ONE church entity. Other employment is by agreement, not under call.

- e) The work-load for the call must be no less than an average of 15 hours per week.
- f) Compensation shall be commensurate with synod compensation guidelines that apply to individuals in full-time positions.
- g) Any contemplated non-church employment for the rostered minister shall be subject to the review and approval of the synod bishop.
- h) Part-time reserve component military chaplaincy alone does not normally meet the threshold for minimum work-load hours as a shared-time call.

3) Procedures for call to shared-time ministry

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides principles and procedures for the calling of ministers of Word and Sacrament (churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A16.). In addition to the regular procedures, a letter of call for shared-time ministry shall include the following:

- a) The range of duties and responsibilities shall be specified by adding appendices to the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities," related to the letter of call (*C9.09.).
 - i. If a minister of Word and Sacrament is called as the only pastor of a congregation, it shall be to the full range of such duties. If the call is to a congregational staff position, the shared-time pastor shall have significant responsibility for preaching and administration of the sacraments.
 - ii. If a minister of Word and Sacrament is called to a ministry in a non-congregational setting, specialization of function may be appropriate, provided opportunity for Word and Sacrament ministry is included.
- b) The decision to seek a shared-time pastor shall be based upon a study of mission and ministry needs in the particular setting. Appropriate synod or churchwide leaders must participate in the study and decision.
- c) A periodic evaluation by the calling entity shall be encouraged by the appropriate synod bishop or churchwide leaders so that the called person is held accountable for the ministry in that particular situation. The calling entity is accountable for adequate professional and financial support.
- d) Any exceptions to the guidelines governing time and compensation must be requested from the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

4) Appropriate candidates for shared-time ministry

Shared-time ministry demands the ability to use time efficiently, the flexibility to adjust to altering circumstances, and the willingness to make a positive contribution to church and society through secular employment or other interests. The effective shared-time leader has a clear sense of personal ministry and professional integrity. He or she has a concept of ministry that values extensive shared leadership with laity.

It is appropriate for ministers of Word and Sacrament to offer themselves for shared-time ministry, as with all specific ministries, on the basis of their own sense of vocation and their sense of the needs of this church. It is not appropriate, however, for this dual-vocational interest to take priority over the mission needs of this church.

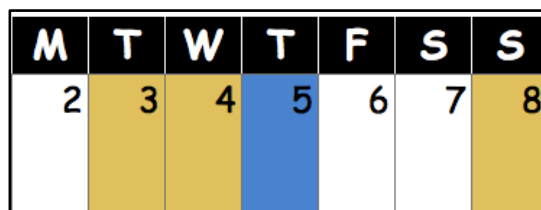
5) Support and accountability in shared-time ministry

The nature of shared-time ministry requires that the employing entity pay particular attention to such matters as compensation and benefits, setting of non-working times for meetings, and specifying shared expectations, which acknowledge the special dynamics of this style of ministry.

- a) Accountability of the shared-time person is the same as with all rostered ministers.
- b) Evaluation of the ministry should be based upon the stated goals and conditions established for that ministry at the time of call.
- c) The entity of this church that calls the individual will review the ministry annually to evaluate the ongoing appropriateness of the shared-time style for that particular mission opportunity.

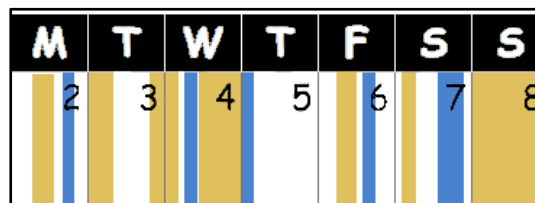
Appendix B: *Graphs and Visual Models of Part-Time Ministry in a Congregation*

When considering the responsibilities of a part-time rostered minister, it can be tempting to think that they would be able to divide their time neatly and in accordance with their priorities. Some time or even a whole day might be devoted to visitations, for example. Another day might be set aside to plan Bible studies or a sermon. Another day may be used to attend and perhaps lead meetings and committees. A week in the life of a part-time rostered minister in this scenario might look like this, where white indicates days off; the blue indicates a day to write a sermon and plan worship; the beige indicates other working days:



Please note: These colors will not print clearly in grayscale or black and white.

The reality looks more like this: the same part-time tasks, but spread throughout the week.



The following graphic gives a visual representation of what this model might look like for a rostered minister at 60% time:

60% time by the day

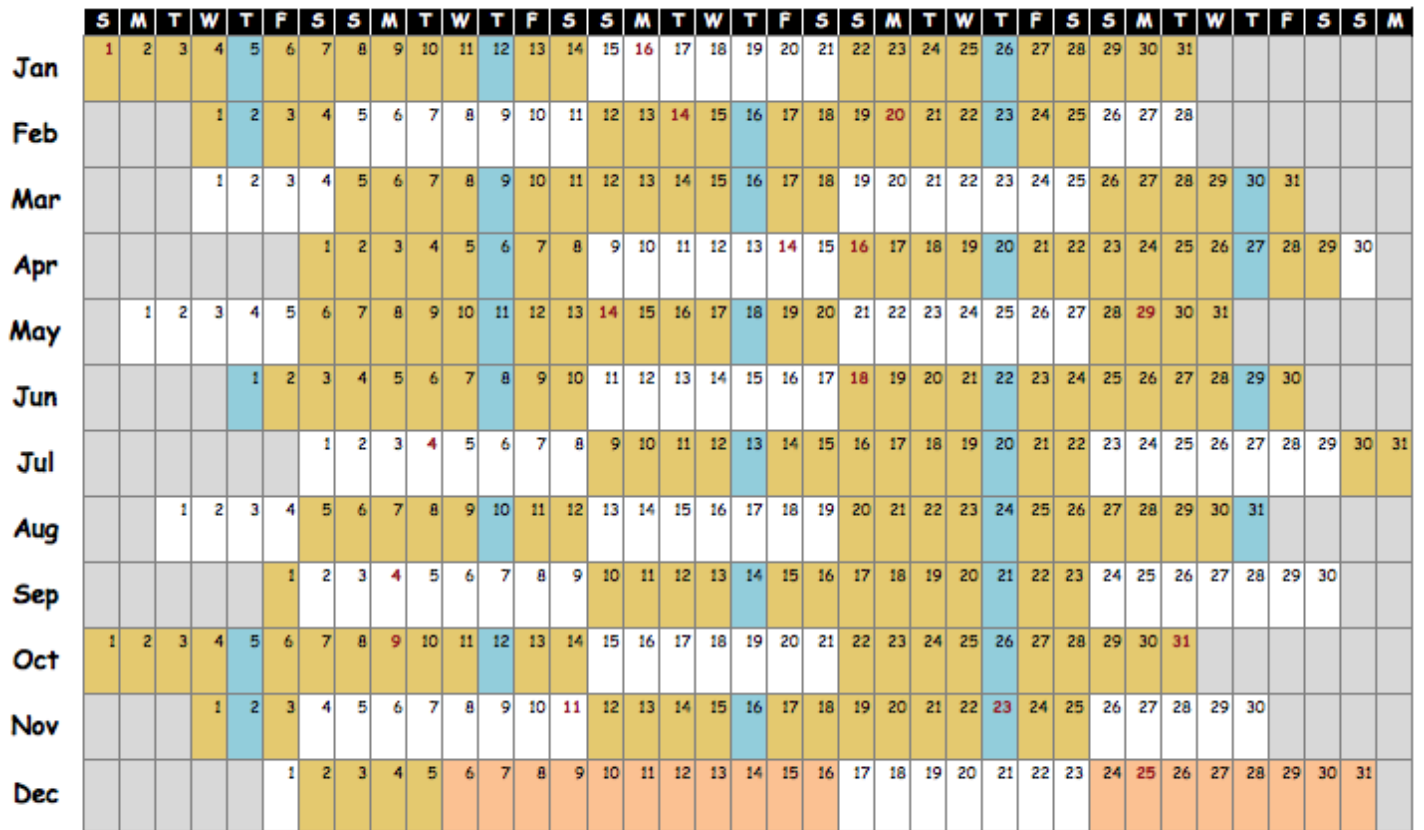
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M							
Jan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
Feb				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28						
Mar				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
Apr							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
May		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
Jun					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
Jul							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Aug			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
Sep						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
Nov				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
Dec						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

48 sermon writing days
vacation

Approximately 60% time may be three weekdays, plus Sunday morning.

The following graphic gives a visual representation of what this model might look like for a rostered minister at 66% time:

66% by the week



31 sermon writing days

Graphic is for illustration and does not show "days off" in a typical "full time" week.

vacation (.66 of 4 full time weeks)

Of course, congregations and rostered ministers may find that some combination of these models may work best for them in their context. Open, honest, clear communication is of utmost importance, regardless of which model is considered.

Appendix C: *The Supply of and Demand for Clergy in the ELCA*

The Supply of and Demand for Clergy in the ELCA

Adam DeHoek and Kenneth Inskeep

Research and Evaluation, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

March 2016

One of the important issues facing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the future supply of and demand for ordained clergy. The matter is complex because of the many factors in play. These factors

include the number, size, location and financial capacity of congregations; the mobility of pastors and their geographic distribution; the number of Master of Divinity (M.Div.) graduates and Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM)¹ certificate program graduates; the retention of pastors before retirement age; and the number of pastors who are retiring. For our conclusions, see page 16.

FACTORS RELATED TO DEMAND

What are the number, size, location and income of ELCA congregations?

The Number of Congregations

Between 2005 and 2014, the number of congregations in the ELCA decreased 11 percent, from 10,549 to 9,392 (-1,157). Nearly 60 percent of this net decline was the result of 678 congregations leaving the ELCA in response to the decision of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to ordain gay and lesbian pastors in committed relationships. In addition to these congregations, however, another 788 congregations have closed and 218 have consolidated, merged or been asked to leave the ELCA. These losses were offset somewhat by the 433 new congregations that were developed and organized.

Table 1. Changes in the statuses of congregations in the ELCA from 2005 to 2014

Status	Number	Net Change	Final Year's Worship Attendance (Median)
Closed	788	-788	25
Withdrew	678	-678	84
Consolidated (two congregations became a new congregation)	124	-62	52
Merged (one congregation became part of another congregation)	64	-32	41
Removed (congregation was asked to leave the ELCA)	30	-30	30
Total no longer ELCA congregations		-1,590	50
Newly developed ELCA congregations	433	433	
Net		-1,157	

Size

In 2005, the baptized membership of the ELCA was 4.85 million and the median size of a congregation, based on baptized membership, was 296. On a typical Sunday in the ELCA, 1.44 million people were in worship and the median number of worship attendees was 91. In 2014, baptized membership was 3.78 million and the median size of a congregation, based on baptized membership, was 247. On a typical Sunday, worship attendance was 1.02 million and the median number of worship attendees was 70. This represents a 22 percent

¹ TEEM is a contextual-education program that prepares students for ordained ministry in the ELCA. Students typically study in their ministry context with a pastor(s) while doing ministry in a congregation they intend to eventually serve. The curriculum consists of courses taught by seminary faculty. Students typically meet several times a year on campus with their professors. They also complete an internship and Clinical Pastor Education (CPE).

decline in baptized membership and a 29 percent drop in worship attendance. Over the same time period, the proportion of ELCA congregations with less than 50 people in weekly worship increased from 23 percent to 33 percent while the number of congregations with 350 or more in worship declined from 676 to 376.

Location

In 2005, half of ELCA congregations were in rural areas or in small towns with a population of fewer than 10,000. In 2014, the proportion of congregations in rural areas or small towns was similar (48%). These rural and small town congregations account for about 31 percent of the worship attendees in the ELCA. (According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 20 percent of the U.S. population resides in rural areas.) In 16 ELCA synods, three out of every four congregations are located in a rural area or a small town. In an additional 13 synods, the proportion of congregations located in rural areas or small towns is between 50 and 75 percent.

Table 2. Distribution of ELCA congregations by community setting in 2005 and 2014

Setting	2005			2014			2005-2014 Percent Change in Attendees
	Percent of Congregations	Percent of Worship Attendees	Average Worship Attendance	Percent of Congregations	Percent of Worship Attendees	Average Worship Attendance	
Rural farming	23.6%	10.9%	54	23.3%	11.3%	42	-22.2%
Rural non-farming, open country	6.1%	3.8%	65	5.2%	3.0%	50	-23.1%
Small town under 10,000	20.0%	16.9%	95	19.7%	16.5%	67	-27.4%
Small city of 10,000 to 50,000	13.3%	16.6%	132	14.3%	17.4%	95	-28.0%
Small city of 50,000 to 250,000	11.2%	15.4%	135	11.0%	14.9%	99	-26.7%
Suburb near city of 50,000 to 250,000	3.7%	5.5%	130	4.3%	6.2%	106	-18.5%
Large city of 250,000 or more	9.2%	9.7%	85	9.7%	11.6%	74	-12.9%
Suburb of large city within 10 miles	8.1%	12.7%	143	7.9%	11.5%	105	-26.6%
Suburb of large city outside of 10 miles	4.9%	8.6%	174	4.8%	7.7%	122	-25.9%
Total	100%	100%	91	100%	100%	70	-23.1%

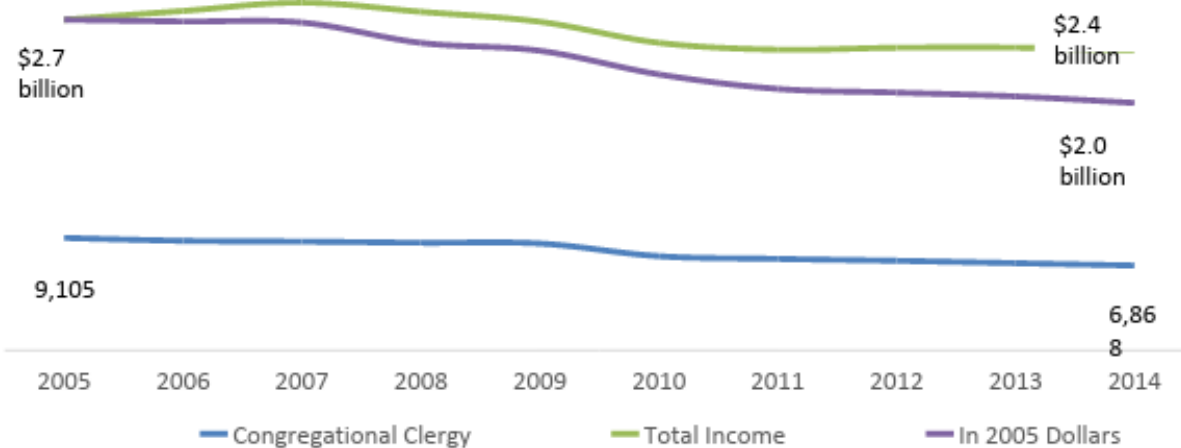
Income

It is significant that baptized membership and worship attendance have both declined at a faster rate than the number of congregations. As noted above, from 2005 to 2014, the number of congregations declined 11 percent while the number of baptized members declined by 22 percent, and the number of worship attendees declined by 29 percent. This drop in membership and participation has negatively impacted the financial capacity of many congregations. The median total income for an ELCA congregation in 2005 was \$151,000. In 2014, the median total income was \$117,000 (adjusted for inflation), representing a 23 percent decline in financial resources.

What are the implications of these trends on the demand for a pastor?

In 2005, there were 9,105 clergy serving congregations. In 2014, there were 6,868. As noted above, between 2005 and 2014, the income of a typical congregation in the ELCA declined by 23 percent. Over the same period, the number of pastors serving congregations declined by 25 percent. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Congregational income and the number of clergy (with calls to congregations) in the ELCA from 2005 to 2014



With congregational income decreasing, more and more congregations are pressed to afford a pastor. Most congregations prefer to call a full-time pastor who can devote his/her time solely to that congregation. We can illustrate the costs of this option by using the 2014 compensation guidelines for Northeastern Iowa—a synod in the middle of the ELCA with modest living costs. Based on the compensation guidelines for Northeastern Iowa, the income requirements for a congregation would be as follows:

Northeastern Iowa Synod Compensation Guidelines for a First-Call Pastors in 2014

<u>Defined Compensation</u>	Cost
Base Salary	\$35,951
Housing (30% of base salary)	\$10,786
Social Security Offset (7.65% of salary and housing)	<u>\$3,575</u>
<u>Sub-Total Defined</u>	<u>\$50,312</u>
<u>Other Compensation Costs</u>	
Health Insurance (Portico Gold+) and Retirement Contribution	\$12,800
Continuing Education	\$900
Books, Periodicals, Other Professional Expenses	<u>\$700</u>
<u>Sub-Total Other Compensation Costs</u>	<u>\$14,400</u>
Total Compensation	\$64,712

In addition to these compensation costs, a very conservative estimate of the costs for basic operating expenses would be 20 percent, or about \$12,924. This means the minimum a congregation needed in 2014 to call a first-call, full-time pastor was just under \$78,000.

Base Congregational Income Needed to Call a First-Call Pastor

	Cost
Total Compensation	\$64,712
Operating Expenses	<u>\$12,924</u>
Total Income Requirement	\$77,636

In the ELCA, in 2014, 6,192 single-point congregations could afford to issue such a call. Of the 1,941 single-point congregations that do not reach this income level, the median level of defined compensation currently provided to their pastors is around \$26,000, suggesting the vast majority are using supply or part-time pastors.

For some congregations, an alternative is to share a pastor. Based on the relationships we can identify, we know there are at least 1,256 congregations in the ELCA (13%) involved in 532 pastor-sharing relationships. Of these sharing relationships, 499 (consisting of 1,189 individual congregations) can afford to issue a full-time call to a first-call pastor.² There are 33 relationships (consisting of 67 individual congregations) that, despite sharing, continue to be short of the baseline income needed to issue a full-time call to a first-call pastor. Table 3 presents the distribution of congregations in the ELCA in terms of their ability to afford a full-time, first-call pastor.

Table 3. Number of congregations/parishes (units) able to afford a full-time, first-call pastor based on a total congregational income of \$78,000

	Have Adequate Income to Issue a Full-time Call		Do Not Have Adequate Income to Issue a Full-time Call	
	Units	Total Number of Congregations	Units	Total Number of Congregations
single-point congregations	6,194 (\$214,000)	6,194	1,941 (\$42,000)	1,941
multiple-point parishes	499 (\$157,000)	1,189	33 (\$63,000)	67
Total	6,691	7,383	1,974	2,008

Seventy-seven percent of the pastors serving under a congregational call in the ELCA are solo pastors serving a single congregation. Nine percent serve a single congregation as part of a team. Eleven percent are solo pastors serving two or more congregations, and three percent serve more than one congregation as part of a team. Again, given the financial circumstances of congregations, we expect the number of sharing relationships to increase so there will be more pastors serving two or more congregations either solo or as part of teams. Over 90 percent of the sharing relationships are currently between congregations in rural areas or in small towns with under 10,000 in population. However, there are approximately 450 congregations in medium and larger cities (50,000 or more in population or the suburbs of these cities) without the means to compensate a full-time, first-

² It is likely we are under-counting the number of sharing relationships. We are calculating the ability to afford a full-time, first-call pastor based on the combined total income of the congregations in the sharing relationship.

call pastor at guidelines. None of these congregations is in a sharing relationship though it would seem a very reasonable alternative.

What has the demand been over time?

One way to assess the demand for ELCA clergy over time is to examine the *ratio* of members to pastors. This is more complicated than it might seem, but critical to a realistic assessment of the future.

The best way to calculate a ratio would be to establish the number of people who could create demands on the time of a pastor and divide that number by the number of pastors serving congregations. This number would include the congregation’s active participants, those who are part of the congregation’s wider circle (such as former members or the extended family members of active participants), and those in the wider community where the pastor may be proactively involved. Because no such number is readily available, we need the best possible alternative. This number is undoubtedly higher than the number of worship attendees. If, however, the baptized membership rolls typically include people who have not been involved with the congregation for years (young adults, people who have moved away, people who are simply no longer accounted for), this should roughly offset a count of those in the wider circle of the congregation or in the local community. Since we believe the baptized membership rolls of most congregations are not regularly cleaned, we believe baptized membership is an adequate proxy for the number of people, inside and outside of the congregation, who could create demands on the time of a pastor.

Table 4 presents the number of baptized members per pastor in 2005 and 2014 by synod.

Table 4. Baptized members per pastor in 2005 and 2014 by synod

		Baptized Membership		Baptized Members per Congregational Clergy		2005-2014
		2005	2014	2005	2014	Change
Alaska	1A	10,475	9,352	317	407	89
Northwest Washington	1B	52,125	37,410	404	382	-22
Southwestern Washington	1C	40,177	28,806	369	335	-34
Eastern Washington-Idaho	1D	35,121	23,603	382	369	-13
Oregon	1E	44,036	32,562	344	336	-8
Montana	1F	49,788	35,985	493	467	-26
Sierra Pacific	2A	63,878	43,068	319	289	-30
Southwest California	2B	41,080	30,129	329	331	2
Pacifica	2C	55,234	31,297	389	401	12
Grand Canyon	2D	73,823	46,014	581	506	-76
Rocky Mountain	2E	82,409	60,742	491	419	-72
Western North Dakota	3A	67,016	60,309	698	670	-28
Eastern North Dakota	3B	102,595	92,708	834	858	24
South Dakota	3C	122,302	104,238	637	709	72
Northwestern Minnesota	3D	109,316	90,346	632	684	53
Northeastern Minnesota	3E	75,285	61,822	598	672	74

Southwestern Minnesota	3F	134,873	116,138	610	695	85
Minneapolis Area	3G	221,432	181,822	774	870	96
Saint Paul Area	3H	158,767	121,711	836	857	22
Southeastern Minnesota	3I	131,578	120,310	693	933	240
Nebraska	4A	120,933	100,964	636	594	-43
Central States	4B	64,526	50,734	436	483	47
Arkansas-Oklahoma	4C	13,564	9,308	308	332	24
N. Texas-N. Louisiana	4D	34,915	25,685	411	334	-77
Southwestern Texas	4E	67,902	37,689	462	397	-65
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	4F	47,658	36,539	429	425	-4
Metropolitan Chicago	5A	113,316	86,091	545	535	-10
Northern Illinois	5B	95,354	71,634	631	607	-24
Central/Southern Illinois	5C	57,532	41,152	449	490	40
Southeastern Iowa	5D	97,020	96,545	610	737	127
Western Iowa	5E	69,246	51,173	624	692	68
Northeastern Iowa	5F	92,271	71,796	664	740	76
Northern Great Lakes	5G	38,531	27,441	584	549	-35
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	5H	106,463	91,500	630	709	79
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5I	97,571	80,061	673	715	42
Greater Milwaukee	5J	93,289	75,227	562	549	-13
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5K	110,668	97,171	723	709	-14
La Crosse Area	5L	43,131	33,319	634	653	19
Southeast Michigan	6A	62,748	43,082	490	513	23
North/West Lower Michigan	6B	52,456	37,281	423	429	5
Indiana-Kentucky	6C	76,292	52,934	419	417	-2
Northwestern Ohio	6D	96,444	73,266	585	660	76
Northeastern Ohio	6E	83,213	56,838	467	466	-2
Southern Ohio	6F	96,177	67,108	512	460	-52
New Jersey	7A	74,630	56,058	434	403	-31
New England	7B	69,737	54,065	383	373	-10
Metropolitan New York	7C	75,788	63,370	405	456	51
Upstate New York	7D	77,105	54,991	528	534	6
Northeastern Pennsylvania	7E	154,682	123,547	730	744	15
Southeastern Pennsylvania	7F	94,334	75,685	524	591	67
Slovak Zion	7G	5,079	3,685	299	263	-36
Northwestern Pennsylvania	8A	28,648	20,276	562	483	-79
Southwestern Pennsylvania	8B	86,079	64,385	582	637	56

Allegheny	8C	41,711	34,378	623	649	26
Lower Susquehanna	8D	122,617	92,542	576	526	-50
Upper Susquehanna	8E	41,807	32,720	523	584	62
Delaware-Maryland	8F	89,967	62,098	511	493	-18
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	8G	36,121	29,267	410	412	2
West Virginia-Western Maryland	8H	15,876	12,214	429	382	-47
Virginia	9A	43,516	34,721	357	344	-13
North Carolina	9B	86,449	57,955	416	394	-21
South Carolina	9C	60,238	46,632	433	395	-38
Southeastern	9D	56,203	42,360	372	368	-4
Florida-Bahamas	9E	81,519	57,135	420	420	0
Caribbean	9F	6,140	4,368	198	168	-30
ELCA		4,850,776	3,765,362	533	548	15

Overall, the ratio of baptized members to pastors under call from congregations has increased about three percent from 533 in 2005 to 548 in 2014. Over this period, the number of clergy has decreased by 25 percent compared to a 22 percent decrease in baptized membership. This would suggest, the supply and demand for clergy regulates itself, at least to some extent. In most synods, when comparing the ratio of baptized members to the number of pastors serving congregations between 2005 and 2014, there is little evidence of a significant shortage through 2014. On the other hand, there are several synods where the ratio of baptized members to pastors is considerably below or above the average.³

The nine synods in Table 5 have a lower number of baptized members per pastor than what is typical in the ELCA. This happens when the congregations are relatively small and when there are few pastor sharing relationships. In short, it is reasonable to suggest, at least when examining the entire ELCA, there are too many clergy in these synods.

Table 5. Synods where the ratio of baptized members to congregational clergy is low

		Baptized per Congregational Clergy	Average Size (Baptized)	Congre- gations	Can Afford First- Call	Sharing Relation- ships	Percent Sharing
Southwestern Washington	1C	335	351	86	91.9%	2	2.3%
Oregon	1E	336	291	115	71.3%	0	0.0%
Sierra Pacific	2A	289	237	185	84.3%	6	3.2%
Southwest California	2B	331	260	122	82.8%	6	4.9%

³ More than one standard deviation unit from the mean.

Arkansas-Oklahoma	4C	332	179	53	64.2%	3	5.7%
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana	4D	334	259	102	76.5%	2	2.0%
Slovak Zion	7G	263	160	23	43.5%	0	0.0%
Virginia	9A	344	228	154	64.9%	16	10.4%
Caribbean	9F	168	132	33	18.2%	0	0.0%
ELCA		548	407	9,390	78.6%	1,189	12.7%

There are 12 synods where the ratio of baptized members to congregational clergy is considerably above the average. (See Table 6.) These synods have relatively large congregations or a high percent of sharing relationships. Given the high ratio of baptized members to congregational clergy, it is reasonable to suggest that there are too few clergy in these synods.

Table 6. Synods where the ratio of baptized members to congregational clergy is high

		Baptized Membership per Congregational Clergy	Average Congregation Size (Baptized)	Congregations	Percent Can Afford First-Call	Sharing Relationships	Percent Sharing
Eastern North Dakota	3B	858	444	210	67.1%	83	39.5%
South Dakota	3C	709	504	210	69.5%	50	23.8%
Southwestern Minnesota	3F	695	474	247	83.3%	97	39.3%
Minneapolis	3G	870	1,245	147	95.2%	0	0.0%
Saint Paul	3H	857	1,148	111	91.9%	0	0.0%
Southeastern Iowa	5D	737	695	139	82.7%	11	7.9%
Western Iowa	5E	692	391	131	78.6%	35	27.5%
Northeastern Iowa	5F	740	469	152	80.9%	48	31.6%
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	5H	709	464	197	81.7%	57	28.9%
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5I	715	640	125	93.6%	19	15.2%
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5K	709	699	141	84.4%	10	7.1%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	7E	744	454	274	74.8%	18	6.7%
ELCA		548	407	9,390	78.6%	1,189	12.7%

Comparing the Number of Clergy to the Number of Congregations

An additional way to assess the distribution of clergy is by comparing the number of clergy in a synod to the number of congregations. Do synods have enough clergy to serve their congregations? When the proportion of clergy called to serve congregations is compared to the proportion of congregations in the ELCA as a whole, the largest deficits are in Eastern and Western North Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Allegheny, and Northeastern Pennsylvania. In North Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, and the Allegheny, the deficit is offset

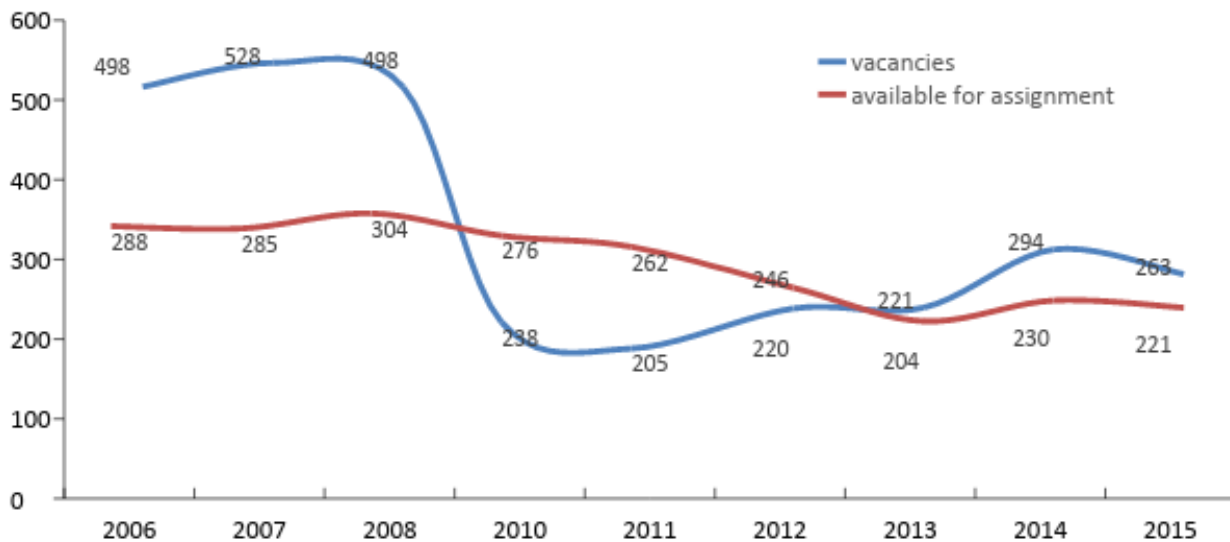
by the number of congregation in sharing relationships. In Western North Dakota and in Eastern North Dakota over a third of congregations are in sharing relationships. In Northwestern Minnesota and Allegheny, it is just under a third. Only in the Northeastern Pennsylvania synod, where about seven percent of the clergy serve more than one congregation, is there a noticeable shortage of pastors to serve congregations and this shortage could potentially be addressed through additional sharing relationships.

The Assignment Process

The ELCA's assignment process has received considerable attention as a barometer for the supply and demand for clergy in the ELCA. Candidates for ordination, in their final semester of seminary, participate in the assignment process. This is a process where each synod identifies its vacancies and attempts to match candidates to fill those vacancies. Assignments are typically made in February (when the vast majority of vacancies are identified and two-thirds of the candidates are assigned) and in September/October (when up to a third of the year's candidates may be available for assignment).

A "vacancy" is an open position for a full-time, first-call pastor. In February 2005, there were 508 reported vacancies for first-call candidates. (See Figure 2.) In February 2015, the number was 263. A major portion of this decline occurred between 2008 and 2010 when the number of vacancies dropped by more than half, from 498 to 238. In 2009, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly took action to ordain gay and lesbian clergy in committed relationships. As it became clear this change in church policy would be seriously considered, synod bishops and staff began spending more and more time addressing the concerns of some congregations. As a result, assessing vacancies and examining candidate profiles became less important. (Figure 2 does not include figures for 2009.) In addition, there was a significant economic downturn which impacted congregations. Between 2009 and 2011, 44 percent of ELCA congregations experienced a decline in their income (about 12% on average), and the number of retiring pastors dropped from 340 in 2008 to 276 in 2009. Since 2009, the number of reported vacancies has recovered somewhat, and most recently the number of assignments has once again dropped below the number available for assignment.

Figure 2. Vacancies and assignments from 2006 to 2015 (not including 2009)



Candidates and the Demand

At the same time, it is not clear that simply increasing the number of candidates available for assignment will fully address the shortages that do, or more importantly, will exist. Certainly more candidates would help, but there are three remaining issues. First, there will simply be too many congregations looking for first-call pastors because their limited financial resources restrict the possibility of calling a pastor with more experience. Second, since 2005, during the February assignment consultations, the proportion of candidates who have a geographical "preference" has ranged between 75 and 80 percent. These preferences, however, only become

restrictions when granted by a synod bishop. About 20 percent of the candidates are granted restrictions. It is clear that, for a variety of reasons, a significant number of candidates are more and more reluctant to serve across the church. Third, it is important to have candidates who will be acceptable to the bishops. There are a notable number of candidates who, despite having completed all the necessary requirements, are not requested by any synod and, as a result, are returned to their synod of candidacy.

FACTORS RELATED TO THE SUPPLY

What are the Seminary Enrollment Trends?

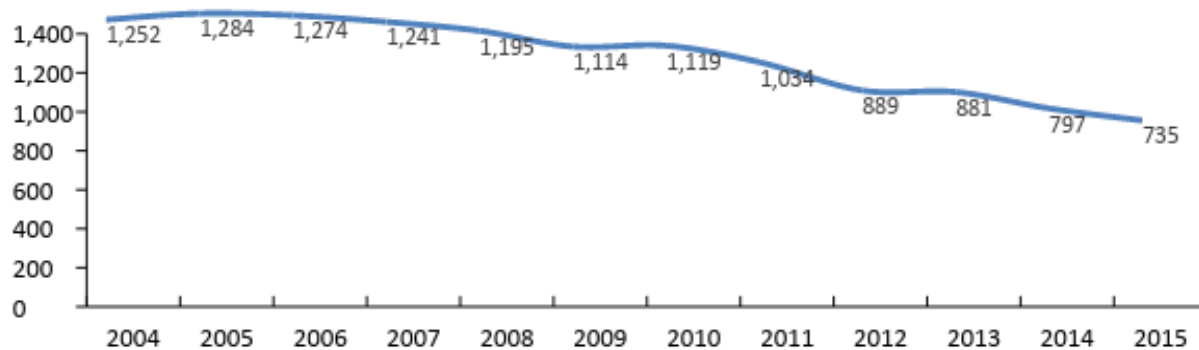
Wheeler, Ruger and Miller, in *Theological Student Enrollment* (2013)⁴, note that enrollment in theological schools in the United States and Canada experienced two different trends between 1992 and 2011. The first was upward from 1992 to 2004, as enrollments increased approximately one percent per year. After peaking in 2004, the trend started downward at roughly the same rate from 2004 to 2011. The economic downturn in 2008-2009 played a significant role in perpetuating the downward trend, but the trend was apparent even before these years.

Specifically, for M.Div. programs, enrollments decreased 7.5 percent from 2006 to 2011 (Wheeler, et al., 2013). Wheeler and her colleagues suggest the decline in theological school enrollment was related to the larger issue of the decline of organized religion in North America.

ELCA Seminary Enrollment Trends

Enrollment declines in the ELCA have been steeper than the general trend. (See Figure 3.) Enrollments in ELCA M.Div. programs have decreased from 1,252 in the 2004-2005 academic year to 735 in the 2015-2016 academic year. This represents a 41 percent decline.

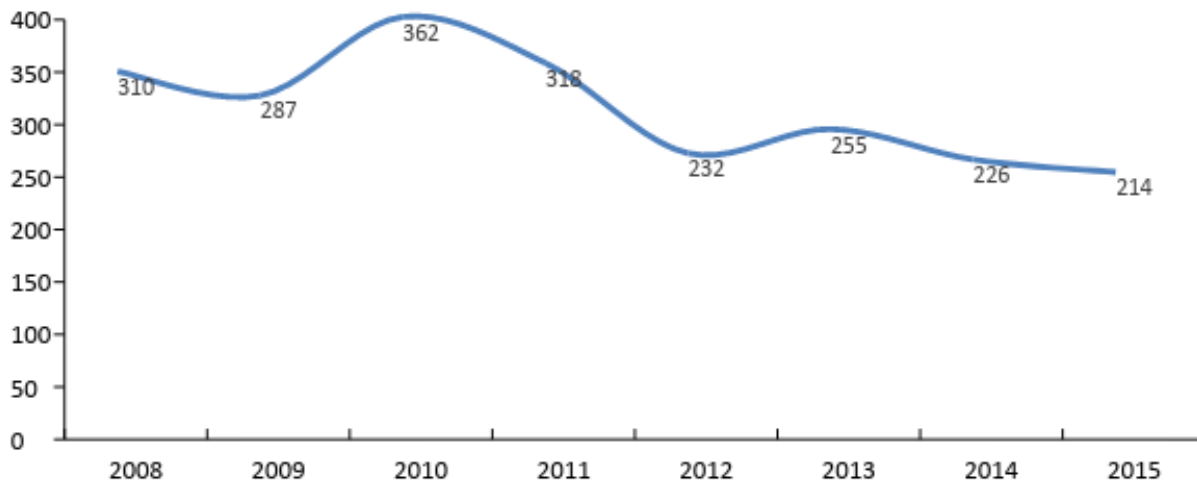
Figure 3. Number of ELCA M.Div. enrollments in ELCA seminaries from 2004 to 2015



Also declining is the number of first-year students enrolled in M.Div. programs. (See Figure 4.) In the 2008-09 academic year, 310 students enrolled as first-year students. Although this number increased to 362 in the 2010-2011 academic year, by the 2015-16 academic year, the number of first-year student enrollments had declined to 214. Between 2008 and 2015, this represented a 31 percent decline.

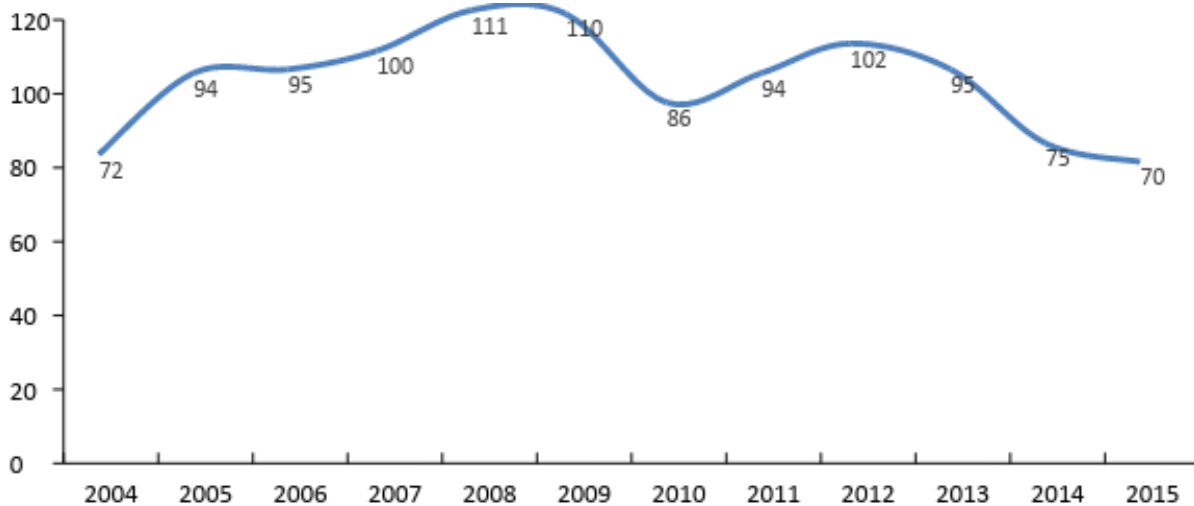
⁴ <http://www.auburnseminary.org/sites/default/files/Theological%20Student%20Enrollment-%20Final.pdf>

Figure 4. ELCA M.Div. first-year student enrollments from 2008 to 2015



During the same period, enrollments in the TEEM certificate program increased, but by 2015 had fallen back to 2004 levels. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Enrollments in the TEEM program from 2004 to 2015



Enrollments of People of Color

Throughout theological education in the U.S., there have been gains in the number of people of color enrolling in M.Div. programs. Wheeler and her colleagues (2013) found, among theological schools in the U.S. and Canada, at the same time enrollments of white students were declining, enrollments among African American and Hispanic students were growing. Looking specifically at the seminaries of mainline Protestant churches, “the white student decline was precipitous from 1992 to 2011 (28 percent). At the same time, African American enrollment increased 82 percent and Hispanic [enrollment] . . . increased 72 percent” (Wheeler, et al., 2013, p. 15).

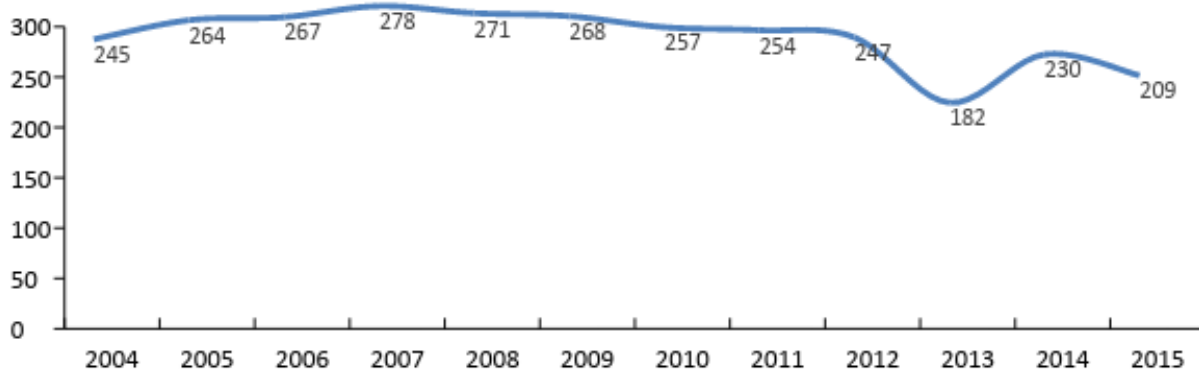
Unfortunately, there is not complete data on the race/ethnicity of students enrolled in ELCA M.Div. programs. Before the 2012-2013 academic year, large numbers of students were categorized as “ethnicity unknown.”

Since the 2012-2013 academic year, the number of persons of color or language other than English enrolled as M.Div. students in ELCA seminaries has been about 7 percent of all M.Div. enrollees.

Graduation Rates

Clearly, lower enrollment rates have led to lower graduate rates. (See Figure 6.)

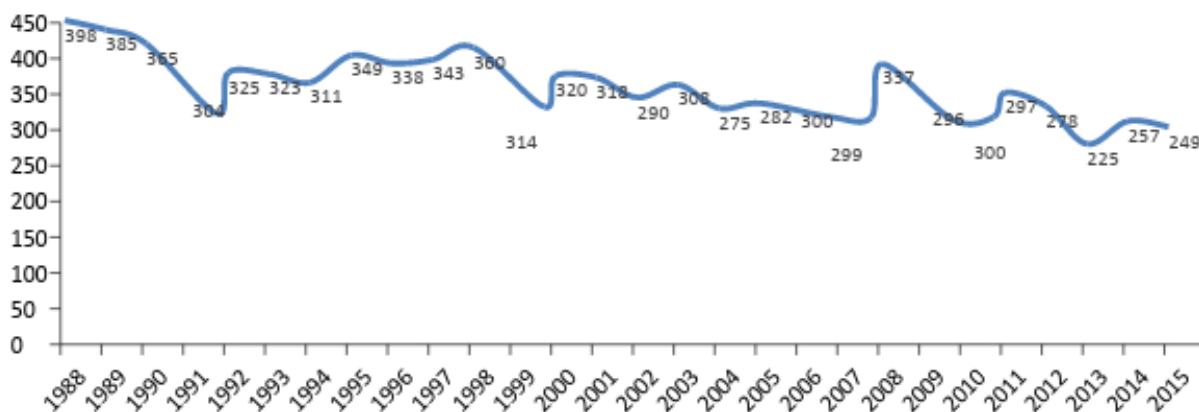
Figure 6. ELCA M.Div. graduates at ELCA seminaries from 2004 to 2015



Ordinations

The annual number of ordinations is also an indicator of the supply of first-call pastors. It shows how many candidates actually received their first call. (See Figure 7.) Between 1988 and 2013, there was a 43 percent decrease in the number of ordinations. This represents an annual average decrease of 1.7 percent. The largest decrease was between 2012 and 2013, from 278 to 225 (19%).

Figure 7. Number of ordinations from 1988 to 2015



How many are leaving the ordained ministry?

As some are becoming new pastors, others are leaving the active roster as a result of resignation, removal or retirement. Annually, between 40 and 70 ordained pastors resign from the active roster and between 30 and 60 ordained pastors are removed. Although these numbers were considerably higher in 2010 and 2011, following the decision by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to ordain gay and lesbian clergy in committed relationships, the numbers in 2012 and 2013 reflect pre-2009 levels.

Increasing age of ELCA clergy

Although resignations and removals decrease the number of ordained pastors, it is the number of clergy retiring that can most significantly and sustainably impact the number of ordained pastors on the active roster in the ELCA.

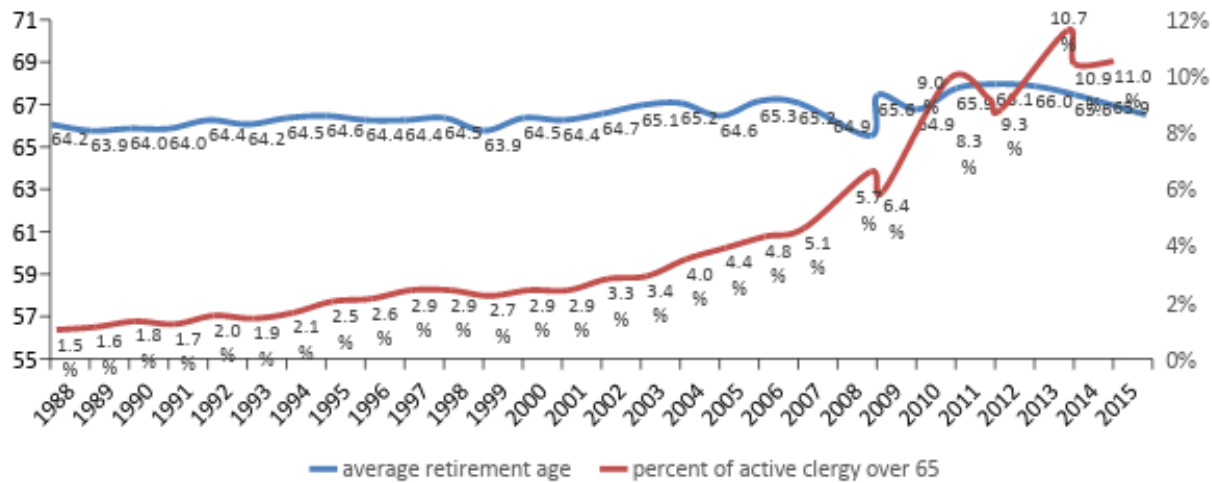
One indicator of a potential increase in the number of retirements is an increase in the average age among ordained clergy in the ELCA. In 1988, the average age on the active clergy roster was just above 46 years old. At that time, just over 9 percent of active clergy were above 60 years old. By 2013, the average age of clergy had increased to 54 years old, with 32 percent of active clergy above 60.

These trends are similar to those of other mainline Protestant churches (Briggs, 2011)⁵. The increasing age of clergy points to an increase in the number of retirements in the coming years. Some have suggested that as pastors who are part of the Baby Boom generation retire, there will not be enough new pastors to replace them. This conclusion assumes pastors of this age will retire and that the congregations they leave will have the resources to call a new pastor. If these conditions are met, then the number of retiring pastors will very likely outpace the number of graduating candidates. However, there is evidence that clergy are remaining in calls past the customary retirement age of 65. Speaking about general trends among clergy, Briggs (2011) states, “Like their secular counterparts, many clergy who devoted their attention to less temporal matters than financial planning now find themselves amid shrinking church budgets and a poor economy being forced to work beyond traditional retirement ages.”

Supporting the trend referenced by Briggs, an increased proportion of ordained clergy in the ELCA is staying on the active roster past age 65. (See Figure 8.) In 1988, the average age at retirement for ELCA clergy was 64 years old, with 1.5 percent of active clergy above 65 years old. By 2015, the average age at retirement had increased to 66 years old; 10.7 percent of active clergy were above 65 years old.

⁵ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-briggs/aging-clergy-and-retirement_b_996659.html

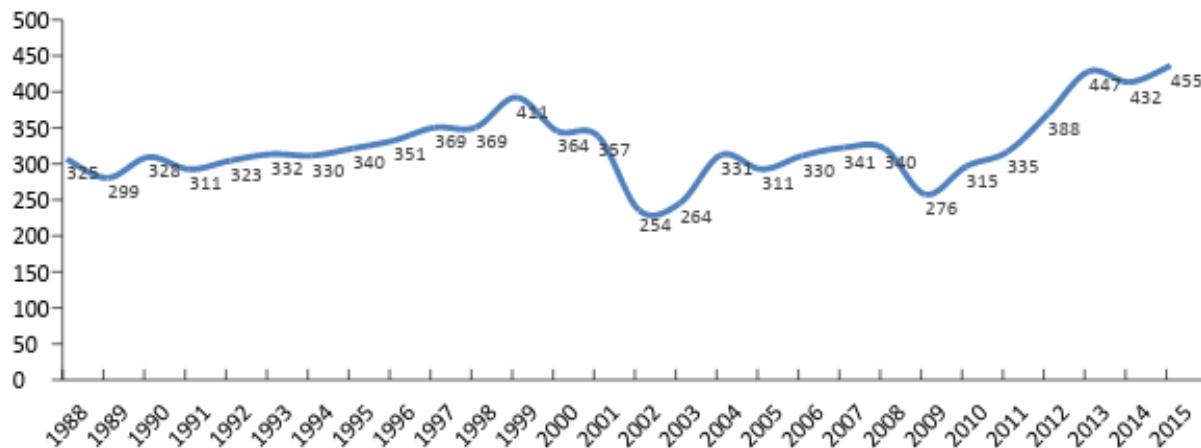
Figure 8. Average retirement age and percent of active clergy above 65 years old in the ELCA from 1988 to 2013



Trends in ELCA Retirements

The average number of clergy retirements per year in the life of the ELCA has been about 345. The number of retirements has been increasing, however. (See Figure 9.) In the first 10 years, about 330 per year retired. In the second ten years, the number increased slightly to 333 per year. Over the last six years, the number retiring per year has increased to about 375 per year. In 2002 and in 2009, there were economic downturns that clearly impacted the number of retirements, but over the last three years, the increase is very apparent. There have been three straight years when over 430 pastors have retired.

Figure 9. Number of ELCA ordained pastor retirements per year from 1988 to 2015



Retirement Estimates and Projections

It is impossible to predict exactly how many pastors will retire in the coming years, but we can make informed estimates and projections based on previous years. Specifically, using the proportion of pastors who have retired at each age in the recent past years and the number of active pastors at each age, we can estimate, and then project, the number who will retire in future years.

For example, there were a total of 6,782 active pastors who turned 60 between 1998 and 2013. Over the same time period, 196 of these pastors retired at 60 years old for a retirement rate of 2.9 percent. Table 7 shows the rates of retirement at each age between 60 and 70 for the years 1998 to 2013.

Table 7. Percentage of active pastors between 60 and 70 who retired at each age from 1998 to 2013

Age	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
Percent who retired	2.9%	3.2%	7.7%	9.3%	9.6%	25.3%	29.4%	23.0%	20.0%	18.2%	24.6%

In order to make the projections, we began by estimating the number of active pastors at each age in 2014 and then multiplied that number by the previous retirement proportions. The estimated number of retirements for 2014 was 467. We know that 432 actually retired so our estimate was close, but a bit too high.

Table 8. Estimating the number of retirements for clergy in 2014

Age	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	Total
2014 Actives	446	475	480	424	381	376	346	237	179	108	79	3,531
Percent who retired	2.9%	3.2%	7.7%	9.3%	9.6%	25.3%	29.4%	23.0%	20.0%	18.2%	24.6%	100%
2014 Projected Retirements	13	15	37	39	37	95	101	55	36	20	19	467

We then estimated the number of active clergy for 2015. (See Table 9.)

Table 9. Calculating the number of projected actives for clergy in 2015

Age	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
2015 Projected Actives	389	433	460	443	385	344	281	245	182	143	88

We followed the same pattern described above to estimate the number retirees for 2015. In 2015, the estimated number of retirements was 449. We know that 455 actually retired, so in 2015 our estimate was closer than for 2014. We were confident enough in the procedure to continue using the strategy through 2019. (See Table 10.)

We believe retirements will peak in 2015 and they will begin a gradual decline through 2019. Between 2015 and 2019, we project more than 2,000 ordained pastors will retire from the active roster.

Table 10: Retirement projections based on percentages of active pastors at each age who retired

Age	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	Total
2015 projection	11	14	36	41	37	87	83	56	36	26	22	449

2016 projection	11	12	32	40	39	88	76	46	38	27	29	436
2017 projection	12	12	28	36	37	92	76	42	30	27	29	422
2018 projection	9	13	27	31	34	88	80	42	28	22	30	404
2019 projection	10	10	29	30	29	80	76	44	28	20	25	382

Conclusions

Is there a Shortage?

There is a shortage of pastors in the ELCA which began to develop in 2012, and it is quite probable the shortage will intensify. While pastors can leave the roster of the ELCA by death, resigning, and being removed, among active clergy serving congregations the most significant component of loss is the number of retirements.

Pastors can come on to the roster of the ELCA by being received from another church, or by being reinstated to the roster of the ELCA, but the most significant component of gain is new ordinations. Table 11 compares the number of retirements to ordinations from 2010 through 2015 with projections for 2015 to 2019. In each of these years, the number of retirements exceeds the number of ordinations, and after 2012 the difference is significant. Table 11 also estimates the number of congregations that will be able to afford a first-call, full time pastor (either alone or as part of a sharing relationship).

Table 11: Retirements, ordinations, and the number of congregations that can afford a full-time, first-call pastor with the number of congregational clergy available to serve those congregations (actual figures through 2015, with projections for 2016 through 2019)

	Retirements	Ordinations	Difference		Congregations	Can Afford a Pastor	Number of Pastors Serving Congregations
2010	315	300	15		10,008	7,638	7,625
2011	335	297	38		9,638	7,411	7,408
2012	388	278	110		9,533	7,385	7,255
2013	447	225	222		9,464	7,365	7,062
2014	432	257	175		9,392	7,383	6,868
2015	455	249	206		9,326	7,278	6,713
2016	449	213	236		9,260	7,173	6,477
2017	436	212	224		9,194	7,069	6,253
2018	422	210	212		9,128	6,966	6,041
2019	404	207	197		9,062	6,864	5,844

What can be done?

In 2019, we believe that about three-fourths of ELCA congregations will be able to afford a first-call, full-time pastor and of these congregations, nearly 20 percent will be in pastor sharing relationships. There will be just over 2,000 congregations that will not be able to do so and since the vast majority of these congregations will remain open, their alternatives for pastoral leadership are fairly straightforward. Either these congregations will become part of sharing relationships or they will find supply, part-time or lay licensed pastors. In places where there is ready access to a significant number of retired pastors, an alternative is to use this pool of clergy. If not, another alternative is to find local people who are willing to become authorized/licensed lay ministers or who are willing to complete a certificate process such as TEEM.

The church needs more persons who will consider ordained ministry and become ordained pastors. Clearly, those concerned about the future of the church should seek out and encourage people they believe might be good pastors and open to the call. Programs to do so should be encouraged and supported by the church.

Finally, it is also possible that the supply of pastors could be increased by making the process of becoming a pastor more flexible, less time intensive and less expensive.

Appendix 1: Number of congregations that can afford a pastor by synod

	Synod	Congregations	Alone	Sharing	Can Afford	Percent that Can Afford	Cannot Afford
Alaska	1A	32	21	0	21	65.6%	11
Northwest Washington	1B	107	93	0	93	86.9%	14
Southwestern Washington	1C	86	77	2	79	91.9%	7
Eastern Washington-Idaho	1D	90	62	12	74	82.2%	16
Oregon	1E	115	82	0	82	71.3%	33
Montana	1F	128	60	24	84	65.6%	44
Sierra Pacific	2A	185	150	6	156	84.3%	29
Southwest California	2B	122	95	6	101	82.8%	21
Pacifica	2C	115	92	0	92	80.0%	23
Grand Canyon	2D	90	80	0	80	88.9%	10
Rocky Mountain	2E	160	139	0	139	86.9%	21
Western North Dakota	3A	177	40	82	122	68.9%	55
Eastern North Dakota	3B	210	58	83	141	67.1%	69
South Dakota	3C	210	96	50	146	69.5%	64
Northwestern Minnesota	3D	232	91	76	167	72.0%	65
Northeastern Minnesota	3E	137	84	31	115	83.9%	22
Southwestern Minnesota	3F	247	110	97	207	83.8%	40
Minneapolis Area	3G	147	140	0	140	95.2%	7
Saint Paul Area	3H	111	102	0	102	91.9%	9
Southeastern Minnesota	3I	175	99	44	143	81.7%	32
Nebraska	4A	241	128	63	191	79.3%	50
Central States	4B	179	93	36	129	72.1%	50
Arkansas-Oklahoma	4C	53	31	3	34	64.2%	19
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana	4D	102	76	2	78	76.5%	24
Southwestern Texas	4E	131	90	11	101	77.1%	30
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	4F	111	86	2	88	79.3%	23
Metropolitan Chicago	5A	184	157	0	157	85.3%	27
Northern Illinois	5B	149	121	12	133	89.3%	16
Central/Southern Illinois	5C	130	80	16	96	73.8%	34
Southeastern Iowa	5D	139	104	11	115	82.7%	24
Western Iowa	5E	131	68	35	103	78.6%	28
Northeastern Iowa	5F	152	75	48	123	80.9%	29
Northern Great Lakes	5G	82	45	23	68	82.9%	14
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	5H	197	104	57	161	81.7%	36
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5I	125	98	19	117	93.6%	8
Greater Milwaukee	5J	130	115	6	121	93.1%	9
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	5K	141	109	10	119	84.4%	22

La Crosse Area	5L	74	33	32	65	87.8%	9
Southeast Michigan	6A	120	93	4	97	80.8%	23
North/West Lower Michigan	6B	118	94	4	98	83.1%	20
Indiana-Kentucky	6C	188	132	6	138	73.4%	50
Northwestern Ohio	6D	164	119	13	132	80.5%	32
Northeastern Ohio	6E	177	126	10	136	76.8%	41
Southern Ohio	6F	200	125	12	137	68.5%	63
New Jersey	7A	173	140	2	142	82.1%	31
New England	7B	186	154	0	154	82.8%	32
Metropolitan New York	7C	195	149	6	155	79.5%	40
Upstate New York	7D	172	106	19	125	72.7%	47
Northeastern Pennsylvania	7E	274	187	18	205	74.8%	69
Southeastern Pennsylvania	7F	157	130	0	130	82.8%	27
Slovak Zion	7G	23	10	0	10	43.5%	13
Northwestern Pennsylvania	8A	85	31	22	53	62.4%	32
Southwestern Pennsylvania	8B	172	97	27	124	72.1%	48
Allegheny	8C	118	42	32	74	62.7%	44
Lower Susquehanna	8D	235	175	22	197	83.8%	38
Upper Susquehanna	8E	126	47	26	73	57.9%	53
Delaware-Maryland	8F	173	124	11	135	78.0%	38
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	8G	76	68	2	70	92.1%	6
West Virginia-Western Maryland	8H	61	23	24	47	77.0%	14
Virginia	9A	154	84	16	100	64.9%	54
North Carolina	9B	193	153	2	155	80.3%	38
South Carolina	9C	156	117	8	125	80.1%	31
Southeastern	9D	153	117	2	119	77.8%	34
Florida-Bahamas	9E	181	159	2	161	89.0%	20
Caribbean	9F	33	6	0	6	18.2%	27
ELCA		9,390	6,192	1,189	7,381	78.6%	2,009