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Definitions

- **Synod** means the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- **Bishop** means the duly elected Bishop of the Synod or such person appointed to serve as Bishop under the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA and Synod.
- **Synod Vice-President** refers to the duly elected vice president of the Synod or such person appointed to serve as vice president under the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA and Synod.
- **Synod Council** means the council elected by the Synod assembly pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA and Synod.
- **Executive Committee** means the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, currently consisting of the four Synod officers and two at large members appointed by the Synod Council.
- **Synod Personnel Committee** is appointed by the Synod Council and is responsible for the review of personnel policies and practices of the Synod. Changes to the policies found in this manual may come from the Personnel Committee but must be approved by the Synod Council. The committee is also available to assist the Bishop in personnel matters as requested.
- **Employer** refers to the Synod
- **Employee** refers to any rostered or non-rostered person in the employ of, and receiving compensation from, the Synod.
- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** is equal to the number of hours a full-time employee works for the Synod.
- **Full-time employee** is an employee who is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week.
- **Part-time employee** is an employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week.
- **Anniversary date** is the date that the employee began employment with the Synod.
- **Probationary period** is the first three months of an employee's position.
- **At-will Employment** refers to the Synod's right to terminate an employee-employer relationship at any time, for any reasons, with or without cause or notice.
- **Volunteer** is an individual who performs hours of service for the Synod without an expectation or receipt of compensation.

General

This policy applies to hiring, terms and conditions of employment, performance management, compensation, and benefits.

Inclusiveness in Employment

The Synod is committed to providing equal opportunity to all qualified individuals for employment without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed or religion (except those under call), age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship status, veteran status, gender identity or expression, mental and/or physical disability or any other characteristic or status that is protected by federal, state or local law.

Consistent with this commitment, the continuing policy of the Synod is to afford equal employment opportunity to qualified persons in all aspects of the employment relationship, including hiring, compensation, promotion, demotion, transfer, selection for training opportunities, layoffs, discharges, and retirement.

Employees with Disabilities

The Synod shall not discriminate in the hiring or employment of individuals who with or without reasonable accommodation can perform the essential employment functions of the position the person holds or seeks to hold. A written job description prepared by the Synod shall define what employment functions are essential.

Equal Employment Opportunity

As part of the Synod's commitment to equal employment opportunity, the Synod will actively seek to increase the diversity of job applicants and the workforce.

Recruitment

- The application process for all positions must include a clear job description, advertising if appropriate, screening, interviewing and recommendation to the Bishop.
- A comprehensive background check, including criminal, driving, and financial will be processed on all new hires prior to the issuance of a letter of employment or letter of call.
- The Bishop will provide a letter of employment to the individual setting forth specific information pertinent to the position (compensation, start date, etc.).
- In addition to a Letter of Employment to a rostered individual, a Letter of Call shall be sent. Term calls that set specific start and end dates of employment may be issued. Terms for those serving under call are co-terminous with the Bishop.
- The Bishop shall notify the Executive Committee in advance of all transfers, promotions, demotions, or terminations affecting employees serving under a letter of call. The Bishop shall consult in advance with the Executive Committee regarding any negotiations with prospective or existing rostered employees regarding changes in the call status.
- An Employment Agreement may be entered into under very limited circumstances by the Bishop or Synod Council. Employees working pursuant to employment agreements may or may not be eligible for health and pension benefits. The employment agreement shall clearly reflect any health or pension benefits provided.

Personnel Administration

Personnel Records

- The Synod office will maintain the personnel records for each employee, containing their hiring agreement, payroll authorizations, salary information, disciplinary records, performance appraisals, and other pertinent documents (i.e., sabbatical leaves, continuing education leave, etc.).
- Employee records are personal and will be kept in a secured file with access only by persons authorized by the Bishop. Employees may review their individual personnel file and all documents contained therein, at a time mutually convenient to the employee and the Bishop.

Background Checks and Trainings

- A comprehensive background check, including criminal, driving, and financial must be completed every three years for all Synod employees and volunteers. Synod financial resources will be used to pay for each required background check.
- Boundaries training must be taken every three years by all Synod employees. Synod financial resources will be used to pay for training.
- We recognize that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training is crucial to building a safe and equitable workspace for all employees. Therefore, all Synod employees shall annually participate in at least one DEI training, approved by the Bishop, to increase their personal and work-related cultural competency. Synod financial resources will be used to pay for training.

Performance Management

- The Bishop will review the performance of each employee near the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter on the employee's anniversary date. Additional performance reviews may be conducted at the discretion of the Bishop. The performance review shall be in writing and discussed with the employee. The position description will be the starting point of the performance review, however other factors may be considered.
- Any performance adjustment in salary will begin 30 days after the review.
- Employees who fail to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner or whose behavior violates Synod policies or otherwise interferes with or disrupts operations shall be subject to discipline or termination. The following are some, but not all, grounds sufficient for immediate dismissal from employment with the Synod: 1) gross misconduct, 2) financial mismanagement or misrepresentation, 3) violation of the Synod drug and alcohol policy, 4) insubordination and 5) breach of confidentiality.
- The appropriateness of discipline in each case lies within the discretion of the Bishop. Circumstances may warrant immediate termination without first imposing other discipline. Options for disciplinary action may include the following:
 - Correction Interview: The Bishop provides a written statement stating what is expected and an invitation to the employee to respond in writing within 5 days.
 - Written Warning: A written warning places the employee on notice that continued inadequate performance or rule violation will lead to further disciplinary action.
 - Suspension: A suspension is the placement of an employee in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status. The bishop will determine the length of a suspension without pay, but not to exceed 14 days.
 - Termination: if the employee's performance is not corrected within the specified time period, the employee is terminated.
- All stages of the disciplinary procedure will be documented in written form, shared with the employee in this form and placed in the employee's file.

Grievance and Appeal

This policy applies only to employees who have passed the probationary period.

- If an employee disagrees with an employment decision that affects that employee, they may file a written grievance with the Bishop within 10 working days of being notified of the employment decision.
- The bishop shall issue a written decision within ten (10) working days of receiving the grievance.
- If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the Bishop, they may appeal the decision in writing to a member of the Executive Committee within 14 calendar days of the Bishop's decision.
- The Executive Committee shall issue a written decision within 14 calendar days after receiving the appeal.
- The Executive Committee has final authority and its decision and action shall be final. There is no appeal to the entire Synod Council.
- Failure to appeal within the time limits constitutes a waiver of the appeal process.
- Written grievances, appeals, decisions and actions will become a part of the employee's personnel file.
- A terminated employee will receive payment of salary or wages and unused vacation pay within three days of termination.

Employee Compensation

The Synod believes it is in the best interest of both the organization and its employees to compensate employees adequately for the value of their work. To the extent permitted by budgetary and funding constraints, the Synod organization uses a compensation system that determines the current market value of a position based on the skills, knowledge, and behavior required of a fully competent employee. All compensation decisions require the approval of the Personnel Committee.

Upon approval of the Personnel Committee, all decisions about compensation are made by the Synod Council at its discretion. Compensation adjustments do not take effect until confirmed in writing by the Synod Personnel Committee.

- The Synod Personnel Committee will review all salaries on an annual basis. After consultation with the Synod Finance Committee, recommendations for adjustments will be made based on the current year's Synod's Rostered Ministers Compensation Guidelines. Any adjustment in salaries will be made in February.
- The Synod pays overtime to employees according to Federal and Washington State law.

Pay Periods

Paychecks are issued the 15TH of every month. If a normal payday falls on a nonworking day, paychecks will be issued on the last working day preceding the nonworking day. Deductions will be made from gross pay as required or allowed by law or as authorized by the employee.

- Although the Synod shall endeavor to be accurate in maintaining payroll records, occasionally an employee may be paid more or less than appropriate. If the employee or the Synod determines a paycheck is more than it should be, the Synod will make a corresponding deduction from the next paycheck or arrange for the employee to pay the overage back over several paychecks.
- If the employee or the Synod determines a paycheck is less than it should be, the Synod will pay the amount due immediately.
- The Synod does not advance pay or benefits.

Employee Benefits

Employees are eligible for all benefits as described after 30 days of employment. Part-time Employees are eligible for all benefits in an amount proportionate to the percentage of time they work, on average, as compared to full-time employment measured as a 40-hour work week.

Vacation Leave

Employees will be granted paid vacation time off from their regular duties to be taken on an annual basis. Vacations should be scheduled in a manner that permits continuous office coverage to be maintained and must be approved by the Bishop.

- Employees are eligible to take paid vacation leave after completion of six months of continuous service.
- Vacation days are based on their date of hire and in accordance with the following schedule:
 - 6 months – 4 years of full-time employment - 10 days per year
 - 5-10 years of full-time employment - 15 days per year
 - 11 years and beyond of full-time employment - 20 days per year
 - or as outlined in the Letter of Call or Letter of Employment
- Vacation time is cumulative to a maximum of 240 hours (6 weeks) per FTE. Accrued vacation time of more than 240 hours (6 weeks) must be used by the employee's anniversary date of the current fiscal year or it will be forfeited. (e.g. if hired on March 6, then you may not have more than 240 vacation hours on the books by any subsequent March 6).
- Part time, employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week (0.5 FTE) or above, will be granted paid vacation time based upon their FTE status in the position (prorated to reflect the hours actually worked). Vacation time is cumulative to a maximum of 6 weeks, based on their part time status.
- If the employee does not have enough vacation time to cover the requested time off, they will be paid only for the time which is still remaining from their annual paid vacation time.
- At the time of termination, any portion of accumulated vacation which has not yet been used will be paid.
- If a employees member terminates their employment and is rehired they will be granted paid vacation time as a new employee, with no credit being given for years of previous service.

Holiday Leave

- Holiday time is to be taken as the calendar holiday occurs. Holiday time will not accumulate and carry over from one calendar year to another.
- When the holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as the paid holiday. When the holiday fall on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as the paid holiday.
- If the employee's regular day off falls on a calendar holiday, the employee shall take an alternative day off within 30 calendar days, subject to approval of the Bishop.
- An employee required to work a calendar holiday will be paid their regular pay and will also be paid the holiday hours; or, may choose to take an alternate day within 30 calendar days of the holiday.
- Full time employees who have completed 30 calendar days of employment, will be paid eight hours of holiday pay for each of the following calendar holidays.
- Part time employees scheduled 20 hours per work week (0.5 FTE) or more, who have completed 30 calendar days of employment will be paid a prorated amount of holiday pay for each of the following calendar holidays, based upon their FTE status (prorated to reflect the hours worked).

Holidays recognized by the Synod are:

- ✓ New Year's Day - January 1
- ✓ Martin Luther King Day - 3rd Monday in January
- ✓ President's Day - Third Monday in February
- ✓ Good Friday
- ✓ Memorial Day- Memorial Day
- ✓ Juneteenth - June 19
- ✓ Independence Day - July 4
- ✓ Labor Day - Labor Day
- ✓ Veteran's Day - November 11
- ✓ Thanksgiving Day - Fourth Thursday in November
- ✓ Friday after Thanksgiving
- ✓ Christmas Eve Day - December 24
- ✓ Christmas Day - December 25

Sick Leave

After 90 days of employment sick leave may be used in increments consistent with the Synod's payroll system and practices.

- Sick leave for full time employees will be accrued at the rate of 8.0 hours per month. Employees begin accruing sick leave on the first day of employment.
- Part-time employees, working a minimum of 20 hours per week (0.5 FTE) or above, will be granted paid sick leave based upon their FTE status in the position (prorated to reflect the hours actually worked).
- Per the Washington *Paid Sick and Safe Leave Law*, employees who work less than 0.5 FTE receive one hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked.
- There is no limit to the amount of sick leave an employee may accrue. Unused sick leave will not be paid out upon departure of employment from the Synod.
- Accrued sick leave paid time is granted for the following reasons:
 - Illness or injury of the employee due to a non-work related reason.
 - Health-related appointments.
 - Parental leave due to pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption.
 - To care for a child of the employee under the age of 18 with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision.
 - To care for a spouse, child*, parent*, sibling, grandchild, grandparent or Registered Domestic Partner. The * signifies that the law includes biological, adopted/adoptive, foster, de facto, step, in loco parentis and legal guardian providing the relative has a serious health condition and documentation of the serious health condition has been received from the relative's healthcare provider.
- If an employee has exhausted their accrued sick leave, they may opt to use vacation time. If an employee needs additional time off, they must request leave without pay.

Family Leave

The Synod complies with the current Washington State Paid Family and Medical Leave laws and all applicable state laws related to family and medical leave. This means that in cases where the law grants an employee more leave than the policies outlined in these policies provide, the Synod will give the employee the leave required by law.

Parental Leave

- Paid leave of up to twelve weeks upon the birth or adoption of a child.

Family Leave for Care of Family Due to Illness

- Paid leave of up to twelve weeks to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition. Immediate family members include the employee's spouse, domestic partner, children

(including step and foster children), parents (including step and foster parents), parents-in-law, grandparents, and siblings (including step siblings).

Substitution of Paid leave

At the employee's request, or the Synod's, certain kinds of paid leave may be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave.

- Accrued vacation and paid personal leave may be substituted for any type of FMLA leave. Accrued medical/sick leave, and accrued paid family leave, may be substituted only in the circumstances where state law or Synod policies allow use of paid leave. In general, sick leave may be used only for leave taken because of an employee's health condition. Accrued sick leave may be used to care for an employee's child under 18 years of age who has a health condition that requires treatment or supervision, as allowed by Washington law.
- If there is any accrued paid leave that may be used for the kind of FMLA leave the employee is taking, it is the Synod's policy that the employee must use that paid leave as part of the employee's FMLA leave. For example, if the employee wants to take 12 weeks of FMLA leave due to their own serious illness and they have accrued two weeks of vacation and two weeks of sick leave, they will first take two weeks of sick leave, then two weeks of vacation, and then have eight weeks of unpaid FMLA leave available.
- If an employee uses paid leave for a purpose for which FMLA leave would be available, it is the Synod's policy to designate their paid leave as counting against your FMLA leave allowance. Employees are required to notify the Synod when they use paid leave for a reason covered by the FMLA so that the Synod may properly account for the leave.

Leave for Jury Duty

The Synod will provide paid time off when an employee is called for jury duty and misses work.

- Employees appearing as a plaintiff, defendant or for non-subpoenaed court appearances will not receive paid time off under this jury duty policy. Vacation or unpaid leave should be used for these instances.
- Employees subpoenaed for reasons related to the performance of their job duties while on paid time will be paid for time spent in depositions and/or giving of testimony.

Military Leave

The Synod follows federal law regarding the granting of time off for military duty.

Bereavement Leave

Upon the death in an employee's immediate family the Synod will grant leave with pay for up to five working days. Immediate family members include the employee's spouse, domestic partner, children (including loss of child during pregnancy, step and foster children), parents (including step and foster parents), parents-in-law, grandparents, and siblings (including step siblings). For the death of a non-immediate family member, the Synod provides employees with one day of leave with pay.

Any additional leave shall be taken as part of the employee's sick and/or vacation leave.

Leave Without Pay

Leave without pay may be approved by the Bishop when such leave will not disrupt the functioning of the Synod.

- Authorized leave without pay will be limited to short durations and not more than 12 months total during any consecutive five (5) year period, except for educational leave (leave for the purpose of advancing an employee's abilities or supplementing professional or skill training) or Military leave.
- Leave without pay for vacation will not be routinely granted and may be approved only by the Bishop.

Housing Allowance

The Synod Council shall designate an amount as the compensation for housing allowance for Synod Rostered Employees. These shall be translated into a dollar figure and entered into the Executive Committee minutes for the meeting immediately preceding the new year.

Reimbursable Expenses

Employees of this synod who are authorized to travel in connection with the performance of their work will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses for transportation, food, and lodging.

- All expenses shall be accounted for on a uniform expense report monthly. Receipts for expenses are to be attached to expense reports.
- The Synod may issue or authorize credit cards to employees when considered practical and appropriate.

Travel Expenses for Spouses of Synod Staff

- When the Bishop travels within the Synod by car, the Synod shall reimburse the reasonable costs of meals and lodging for the Bishop's spouse without prior approval. When the Bishop travels by air or other common carrier within the Synod, the spouse's travel expenses must have prior approval of the Executive Committee.
- With the approval of the Synod Council, the Synod shall pay the reasonable expenses for travel, meals, lodging, and registration for the Bishop's spouse to accompany the Bishop to events outside the Synod at which the ELCA requires the Bishop's presence and at which spouses are encouraged to attend.
- The Synod will pay the expenses of the spouse for Rostered Employees in connection with Synod-sponsored events, including registration for attendance at pastoral conferences, Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly and convocations.

Social Security Contributions

- The Synod will make contributions only for its lay Employees, as required of employers under the Social Security Act.
- Social Security Offset will be provided to Rostered Employees who are employed by the Synod.

Worker's compensation

- As required by Washington State law the Synod provides workers' compensation insurance coverage for all employees at no cost to the employee.

Unemployment Compensation

- Synod office employees are eligible for unemployment compensation and the Synod will cover the cost of unemployment insurance contributions for employees who work at least 30 hours per week (.75FTE).

Pension Plan

Through Portico Benefit Services, the Synod provides a pension plan for the benefit of its regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees, in an amount proportionate to the percentage of time they work on average (FTE).

- Detailed information regarding benefits provided to Employees are contained in brochures published by the Portico Benefit Services and available to all employees. Benefit policies may be modified, added, or terminated at any time at the Portico Benefit Services or the Synod's discretion. The pension benefits are controlled by the language of the plan documents and the actual policies. Further inquiries or questions should be directed to Portico Benefit Services.
- Under the provisions of the ELCA pension plan, a signed agreement between the Synod and the Employee may reduce the Employee's compensation to credit that amount to the pension plan under a tax shelter, as approved by the Internal Revenue Service. The Employee may also contribute to another pension or annuity plan of his/her choice, provided the total of all amounts under the tax

shelter, including the Synod's contribution, do not exceed the current allowable limits of the Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Healthcare and Other Benefit Plans

- Through the ELCA, the Synod offers Portico Benefit Services insurance plans which provide for long-term disability, survivor, and medical/dental benefits. Separate plan documents explain each benefit in detail, and the benefits are controlled by the language of the plan documents and the actual policies. Benefit policies may be modified, added, or terminated at any time at Portico's or the Synod's discretion or by the insurance company. Further inquiries or questions should be directed to Portico Benefit Services.

Survivor Benefit

- Upon the death of an employee, their salary will be paid to their surviving spouse or designated beneficiary of their pension plan through the month in which death occurs, plus one additional month. Where there is no surviving spouse or designated beneficiary, a decision concerning payment to surviving dependents shall be made by the Synod Council in consultation with the Synod Personnel Committee.

Continuing Education

- Rostered and full-time employees shall receive time off for continuing education as the Bishop and Executive Committee shall determine from time to time. Employee continuing education plans are subject to approval by the Bishop. The Bishop's continuing education plans are subject to approval by the Executive Committee.
- Continuing education time and funds cannot be carried over from year to year and unused continuing education time or funds will not be paid out upon termination of employment.
- Exceptions to these provisions require written approval in advance by the Bishop.

Sabbatical Leave

The Synod recognizes that employees have a need to increase and extend their knowledge and competency in their fields of specialization. This may be accomplished through a sabbatical leave.

- A sabbatical leave is normally a period of one to three months, during which time full salary and benefits will be continued. The employee is responsible for any tuition, materials, travel, or other costs associated with the leave. Budgeted continuing education/professional development funds may be applied to these expenses.
- Rostered employees will be eligible for sabbatical leave after five (5) years of continuous full-time service with the Synod. Years of service commence with the date of employment on a full-time basis with the Synod. Leave of absence will not count toward calculation of the five years of eligibility. Leaves of absence shall not necessitate the start of a new five-year period of eligibility.
- Full-time employees will be eligible for six weeks of sabbatical leave after seven-years of continuous full-time service with the Synod. Years of service commence with the date of employment on a full-time basis with the Synod. Leave of absence will not count toward calculation of the seven-years of eligibility. Leaves of absence shall not necessitate the start of a new seven-year period of eligibility.
- Employees granted sabbatical leave shall be committed to a minimum of one year of service to the Synod after the conclusion of the leave, unless the Bishop, in consultation with the Executive Committee, grants an exception. Subsequent leaves for the same employee may be considered per the Synod policy pending completion of sabbatical leaves by other eligible employees.
 - Persons applying for sabbatical leave shall prepare a proposal for their sabbatical program of study. The detailed proposal shall be submitted at least six months prior to requesting approval. The proposal shall include the following statements:
 - Personal and professional goals.
 - Programs designed to achieve those goals.
 - Value of proposed program to the ELCA, the Synod and congregations of the Synod.

- The means by which achievement of the goals will be evaluated.
- Time period for the proposed sabbatical program of study.
- Financial and travel arrangements.
- The Bishop shall notify the Executive Committee of the proposed program of study. Scheduling of sabbatical leaves shall be worked out by the Bishop.
- The Bishop will have priority in the choice of scheduling. Scheduling of sabbatical leave shall be projected sufficiently in advance so that adequate plans for readjustment of workload within the Synod can be made and arrangements, where necessary, for temporary assistance.
- The employee shall make a full report to the Bishop on the work completed within two months after completion of the sabbatical.
- Sabbatical leave shall not be accrued; an employee who leaves employment without using eligible sabbatical leave is not entitled to any sabbatical payment.
- An employee on sabbatical leave will receive full compensation, pension, and medical benefits during such leave. Other allowances or benefits will not be paid during the sabbatical leave period. Employees on sabbatical leave do not earn sick leave or vacation leave during their sabbatical period.
- Continuing education allowances and usage will be suspended until the year following sabbatical leave. Previously accumulated monies are accessible.

Separation and Retirement

Completion of Specific Term

- At the expiration of call, election, or employment of an Employee who is called, elected, or employed for a specific term pursuant to a contract, employment shall terminate at the end of that specified term unless re-election or re-employment occurs. The employee will be paid accrued salary and vacation time as specified in their call, employment agreement, or as found in this document. No separation benefit is provided.

Termination Without Cause

- Employment at the Synod is at-will, and the Bishop may terminate any employee's employment without cause immediately and without notice. Employees terminated due to a reduction in staff are entitled to severance pay in the amount of one weeks' compensation per each year of continuous employment, up to a maximum severance of fifteen weeks' compensation.
- It is understood by all Synod employees that in election years for the office of Bishop, that immediately following the Synod Assembly in which an incumbent Bishop was not re-elected, that their employment by the Synod may terminate at the end of the current Bishop's term. Future employment is at the discretion of the newly elected Bishop.

Resignation

- Employees who voluntarily terminate their employment are asked to give a two-week notice. Employees who resign will receive payment for the time they have worked since the last pay period and for their unused vacation time. An Employee who resigns shall not receive separation pay.

Harassment

The Synod policy is to maintain a workplace free of any form of harassment or intimidation based upon a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, marital status or status with regard to public assistance or any other protected class. Any form of harassment within the workplace is unacceptable behavior and will be dealt with quickly and confidentially including termination of employment for cause. This policy applies to rostered and non-rostered employees and volunteers.

Definition of Harassment

- Harassment is defined as persistently bothering, disturbing, or tormenting another. Harassment may be based on a variety of factors, such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or personal dislike. The reason for the harassment does not matter. The synod prohibits all forms of harassment, including, but not limited to:
- Verbal and electronic communication harassment, such as making derogatory statements, epithets, or slurs to or about another person or group, including deadnaming and incorrect pronoun usage.
- Visual harassment, such as displaying offensive posters, cartoons, or drawings.
- Physical harassment, such as threatening, assaulting, or physically interfering with another person or making other inappropriate or unwelcome physical contact.
- Using Synod email or internet access to obtain, deliver, forward, circulate, or store inappropriate or offensive materials.

Definition of Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Sexual harassment and/or misconduct means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This can also include behavior that, while welcome between the two parties involved, creates an uncomfortable work environment for those around them. There are many forms of offensive behavior, including but not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, leering, and whistling
- Visual harassment such as derogatory or offensive posters, cards, calendars, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, or gestures
- Deliberate assaults or molestation
- Questions or comments about sexual behavior
- Gender-based harassment
- Undesired physical contact
- Inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance
- Persistent sexually oriented humor or language
- Continued or repeated jokes, language, epithets, or remarks of a sexual nature
- Causing another person to engage in a sexual act by threatening that other person, placing that other person in fear, or asserting undue influence over that other person
- Providing or displaying pornographic media to a person below the age permitted by law
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report sexual harassment and/or misconduct
- Any attempt to engage in or perform any of the above.

Reporting of Harassment or Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Persons who believe that they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment and/or misconduct, or any other form of harassment or have had a sexual harassment and/or misconduct issue or any other form of harassment reported to them, must report it immediately to the Bishop, the Bishop's designated representative, or the Synod Council Vice-President.

- As required by law, ordinance, or regulation, the Bishop, the Bishop's designated representative, or the Synod Vice-President shall immediately report this incident to the proper authorities.

Investigation of Harassment or Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Each incident that is reported will be promptly investigated by the Bishop and the Personnel Committee with confidentiality, care, and concern for all involved. This Synod will not engage in or tolerate retaliation against any employee or volunteer for making a good faith claim of misconduct or harassment, or for providing information relating to such complaints during an investigation.

- Investigation will include review of all relevant documentation.
- The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Should an individual's words or conduct be determined to constitute misconduct or harassment, recommendations for action will be developed, and appropriate action will be taken. The action will depend on the severity of the situation.
- The Bishop and Personnel Committee will be sensitive to the needs of all involved and shall provide person filing the complaint and then with the accused to communicate the results and resolution.
- The Bishop and Personnel Committee may recommend a course of action that may include counseling, education, disciplinary action or discharge.
- If a claim is not substantiated, all parties will be informed.

Electronic Communications

The Synod is committed to an environment that encourages the use of technical resources and other forms of electronic communications as essential tools to support the Synod's mission and ministry. The term "technical resources" includes, but is not limited to, all electronic communications systems, computer hardware and software, smartphones, tablets, data, information, email, instant messages, social media sites, Intranet, Extranet and Internet services, domain name registrations, and related systems. All employees are required to abide by this policy in their use of the Synod's technical resources. In particular, technical resources are to be used in a manner that is consistent with good stewardship and the mission and ministry of the Synod; that is responsible, professional, and legal; that does not compromise the security or confidentiality of proprietary or other sensitive information or the Synod's technical resources.

- Employees are expected to use their Synod-provided email address only when representing the Synod unless authorized by the Bishop. Employees are personally responsible for any activities they conduct with a Synod-provided email address, and for any of their activities that can be traced back to the Synod's domain or assets.
- Employees will be held responsible for their use of a Synod provided email address or Synod technical resources to engage in any social media or professional social networking activity, including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, personal blogs, and Twitter. Employees must obtain written approval from the Bishop before establishing any external social media or professional social networks identified with or utilizing equipment or resources of the Synod.
- All technical resources provided by or through the Synod are assets of the Synod and must be acquired only with the written approval of the Bishop. No employee may load, download, or receive software on Synod technical resources without the prior written approval of the Bishop.
- Synod employees do not have a personal privacy or proprietary right in any matter created, received, sent, or stored on Synod technical resources, telephones, equipment, or on third-party resources used for work-related matters, whether or not the matter is designated as private or confidential.
- The Synod has the right, at any time and without prior notice, to monitor employees and to read, listen to, and copy all files or data contained on any technical resource, including but not limited to email messages, instant messages, Internet access records, voice messages, faxes, official employee content on Internet discussion groups, and personal file directories.
- The Synod also has the right in its complete discretion to access all technical resources for the purpose of supporting its mission and ministry, complying with statutory requirements and internal policies regarding internal investigations, and any additional issues that may arise in connection with the management of the Synod's electronic communications systems.

Prohibited Activities

The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional activities that are prohibited in

the use of Synod equipment or technical resources. They include, but are not limited to:

- Violating any law, statute, regulation, or ordinance
- Violating any Synod policy or procedure or otherwise interfering with the mission and ministry of the Synod
- Jeopardizing the safety and security of Synod members, employees, or technical resources
- Jeopardizing the tax-exempt status of the Synod, any ELCA Synod or congregation, or any affiliate listed under the Synod group ruling for federal income tax exemption, including transmission of political or partisan campaign materials
- Violating the legal rights of any person or entity
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Creating unauthorized contractual liability for the Synod
- Giving the impression that personal views are those of the Synod
- Sending anonymous email messages
- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities or using the Internet for any sort of gambling
- Sending or posting messages that defame any other individuals or organizations
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another person or organization
- Downloading or participating in the viewing or exchange of pornographic or sexually explicit materials unless specifically authorized for an investigation or other extraordinary, work-related purposes.

Speaking on Behalf of the Synod

Unless specifically instructed or authorized, employees are restricted from speaking to the news media or others while purporting or appearing to represent the Synod.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all information they share in work-related Internet discussion groups, chat rooms, blogs, or social networking sites is accurate and that any personal opinions they express are clearly identified as personal and not attributed to the Synod.

Posting Recommendations for Colleagues

Online recommendations and comments about current and former Synod employees could have unanticipated consequences, even if made personally by an employee and not on behalf of the Synod.

- Employees must clear all potential recommendations and comments with the Bishop if they refer to anyone who is or was ever associated with the Synod.

Safety and Mission

- Electronic communications that negatively affect an employee's job performance, the safety of others, the Synod's mission and ministry, or the business interests of the Synod may be treated as employment-related, regardless of whether the communication took place during or outside of working hours.

Reporting Violations

- Employees are expected to report any actual or perceived violations of this policy to the Bishop or the Synod Vice-President.

Social Media

The Synod understands that social media can be a helpful and rewarding way to share one's life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. Nonetheless, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. This policy, is intended to assist employees in making responsible decisions about use of social media. The Synod has additional requirements for persons who are employed to create and use social media as part of their employment responsibilities.

Definition

"Social Media" is defined as all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, whether or not associated with the Synod, including postings to one's own or someone else's blog, journal, diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board, or chat room.

Principles and Guidelines for Posting Online

Ultimately, each employee is solely responsible for what they post online.

- Maintain confidentiality. Never divulge information that would be considered confidential.
- Observe all other policies of the Synod. Refrain from inappropriate postings that contain discriminatory remarks, harassment (sexual or any other type), threats of violence, or inappropriate or unlawful conduct.
- Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, members, suppliers, and other people who work with the Synod, the churchwide organization, other synods, or congregations. Keep in mind that resolving work-related complaints by speaking directly with co-workers or supervisors is more effective than by posting to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, an employee who decides to post complaints or criticism, should avoid posting anything that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating; that disparages fellow employees or synods or congregations within the Synod; or that might constitute harassment or bullying.
- Make sure posted information or news is honest and accurate. If a mistake is made, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts that have been altered. The Internet archives almost everything; so even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any rumors or information known to be false about the churchwide organization, any synod or congregation, or other employees.
- When participating in an online community and commenting on topics related to the Synod, employees must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Synod. Do not create a link from any blog, website, or other social media site to a Synod website without identifying yourself as a Synod employee.
- Refrain from using social media while on work time or on Synod equipment unless such activities are related to your duties or have been specifically authorized.
- Employees may not use their Synod email address to register on social networks or other sites for personal use without permission.
- Check comments by others. Any photos or messages that are linked or "tagged" from "friends" and attached to employee site(s) or profile(s) that violate these guidelines are not permitted and, if not promptly removed from the employees own page or site, will be attributed to the employee.
- Employees are prohibited from visiting pornographic, extremist, hate, gambling, and other like sites. Visiting these sites is grounds for immediate dismissal. If an employee accidentally enters such a site, they should alert their supervisor immediately.
- The Synod prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation of a possible deviation.

Gifts and Fees

An employee may not directly or indirectly solicit or accept personal fees or commissions in connection with Synod activities.

- An employee may accept occasional gifts from business acquaintances as a by-product of a healthy business relationship, but only if the gift is of a modest or nominal value (less than \$50) and only if there is no conceivable connection between the gift and any transaction with the Synod.

Safety

Weapons Policy

The Synod prohibits weapons of any type on the premises of the Synod office, or any buildings owned or rented by the Synod, or at any Synod-sponsored event. This general prohibition includes visible or concealed weapons, even those for which the owner has a valid permit. This policy applies to all Synod employees and also to contractors, vendors, and visitors. Prohibited items include any form of weapon, as well as any explosive that is illegal under federal, state, or local laws or ordinances.

To ensure that prohibited weapons and other contraband are not present on its property, the Synod reserves the right to inspect work areas, desks, and personal belongings (including but not limited to employee packages, purses, backpacks, or lunch bags) when the Synod has a reasonable suspicion of possession of prohibited weapons or substances.

Employees who observe or have knowledge of any violation of this weapons policy should immediately report it to the Bishop.

Smoking Policy

Smoking or the use of tobacco, vaping, or cannabis products is not allowed in the Synod Office.

Pets in the Workplace

No pets will be allowed in the Synod Office without prior permission from the Bishop and only after consultation with other potentially impacted employees.

Children in the Workplace

Employees are welcome to bring their children to visit their worksite, provided that the visits are infrequent, brief, and planned in a fashion that limits disruption to the workplace. While children are in the workplace, they must be always supervised by the parent. If the frequency, length or nature of visits becomes problematic, the employee will be advised of the situation by the Bishop and will be expected to take corrective action.

Employees are not permitted to bring sick children to work. Employees are provided paid time off benefits which should be used for personal reasons or to care for a sick child.

Confidential Information

It is Synod policy that certain information be held in confidence by all employees, including information related to personnel; allegations of misconduct; financial matters; medical, psychological, and family matters pertaining to rostered leaders; as well as sensitive information involving congregations and members of congregations.

Each employee shall keep confidential all confidential information with great care and shall not give out any confidential information or use any confidential information outside of the Synod's premises.

Upon termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, each employee agrees not to disclose this information to any other person.

I acknowledge receipt of these personnel policies on , 20 and agree to abide by them.

Employee

Date