

# Policy and Procedures Related to Retired Status or the Designation of Disability

## I. INTRODUCTION

Retired status or disabled status<sup>1</sup> is an ecclesial determination granted by the Synod Council in keeping with its constitutional authority. Such determinations are not necessarily dependent upon an ordained minister receiving retirement or disability benefits.

## II. RETIRED STATUS

- A. An ordained minister who has attained the age of 60 or who has served for 30 or more years on the roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies may be granted retired status by this church.
- B. An ordained minister who seeks retired status on the clergy roster upon attainment of age 60 or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, applies to the synodical bishop for such status.
- C. In the case of an application for retired status, the synodical bishop shall make a determination that the ordained minister is eligible and then recommend to the Synod Council that such status be granted. At the same time the synodical bishop acts to provide for appropriate pastoral care of the congregation previously served by the retiring minister.
- D. An ordained minister who has been granted retired status shall retain that status as long as continued on the clergy roster or until acceptance of a call.
- E. If an ordained minister who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this

church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the ordained minister is rostered may grant permission for the ordained minister to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## III. DISABILITY STATUS

- A. In the case of a request for a designation of disability, the synodical bishop receives and reviews the medical assessment and determination of the Board of Pensions or other insurance carrier regarding the ordained minister's disability. This assessment informs the synod process, but is not determinative. When the synodical bishop concludes that such designation is appropriate, the recommendation is forwarded to the Synod Council for its action. In unusual circumstances, disability status may be granted apart from the individual's receipt of disability benefits. At the same time the synodical bishop acts to provide for appropriate pastoral care of the congregation previously served by the ordained minister.
- B. The continuation of disability status granted to an ordained minister is subject to review and shall be reviewed in the event that disability benefits are terminated. Disability status granted to an ordained minister may be terminated by the Synod Council upon recommendation by the synodical bishop or in the event the ordained minister accepts a call.

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<sup>1</sup>Churchwide bylaw 7.41.17. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides:

**Retirement.** Ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status or for designation of disability on the roster of ordained ministers shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

Churchwide constitutional provision 7.42. stipulates:

Each pastor on the roster of ordained ministers of this church shall be related to that synod:

- h. on whose roster the ordained minister, if disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or
- i. on whose roster the ordained minister, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

*Adopted by the Church Council  
as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
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