

First Call Programme

The Western Synods *First Call Programme* involves rostered ministers in the ELCIC (ordained and diaconal) who are part of an intentional continuing education programme for a three year period during their first call to ministry serving in the western synods of the ELCIC. When congregations/Agencies call a rostered minister to serve in their congregation/Agency, they make a commitment to fund his/her participation in the *First Call Programme*. This means that the congregation/agency is responsible for covering travel, registration, accommodation and meal expenses at the western synods sponsored annual event. The fee is \$1500 per rostered minister.

Program goals relating to ministerial identity, skills and context include:

- Successfully retaining newly rostered leaders in ministry
- developing habits of sustainability i.e. preventing burnout
- addressing expectations for ministry of rostered leaders, congregations and judicatory bodies
- recognition of public vs. private roles for rostered leaders
- strengthening collegial relationships among rostered leaders i.e. support, accountability and respect
- foster appreciation for continuing education
- sharpening skills for congregational development
- reinforcing skills in equipping the saints in leadership for ministry
- gaining tools for and recognizing importance of understanding the context of ministry
- strengthening faith commitments of members
- live into a larger understanding of their work and life as one of continuous teaching and learning
- develop opportunities to provide leadership in their local community
- develop skills for being practitioners in their community & seeing themselves as part of a larger community of practice
- build relationships that enable members to learn from each other
- understanding the context in which they are practitioners of ministry
- creating strong, well-resourced communities
- facilitate the development of accurate congregation mission profiles
- address expectations for ministry of rostered leaders, congregations and judicatory bodies (proactively)
- strengthening collegial relationships among rostered leaders
- learning to identify, prepare, and support first call congregations recognizing signature ministries
- learning to identify, prepare, and support first call congregations

General components of the process include mentorship (all years), annual western synod events, spiritual direction, theological reflection, structured reading, peer-to-peer (cohort) learning, development of an education plan including goal setting and accountability in the context of Mutual Ministry Committee, as well as evaluation by stakeholders.

Specific components of the *First Call Programme* include:

- 25 hours in an annual western synods sponsored learning event to be funded by the calling congregation or agency. Course offerings will include training in practical ministry subjects such as evangelism, stewardship and conflict management, as well as historical/biblical theology and doctrinal theology.
- A further 25 hours in a learning event or events in an area appropriate to the call of the pastor/lay diaconal minister. It is recommended that the REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS DOCUMENT in the Mutual Ministry Handbook be used to determine appropriate areas of study. The expectation is that the rostered minister should sit down with their Mutual Ministry Committee and take a look at what areas of ministry could be strengthened through continuing education and then look for appropriate opportunities to address those needs. The costs for continuing education are the rostered minister's responsibility. It is appropriate to use your continuing education allowance (ELCIC-CEP) and book allowance included in the rostered minister's Letter of Call, compensation package.
- An intentional mentoring relationship with a pastor/lay diaconal minister. Documents supporting this relationship include GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS AND CANDIDATES; SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF A MENTOR; AND SAMPLE MENTORING AGREEMENT. At the end of the three year mentoring process, it is expected that the rostered minister will be available to mentor a new rostered minister through the process.
- Generation and completion of a reading list which would encompass the three disciplines of historical/biblical theology, doctrinal theology and practical theology. It is anticipated that this reading list would be developed using the REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS document from the mutual ministry handbook or a comparable tool. This list should be generated after working through the REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS DOCUMENT. It is fair to expect that the candidate would read 5 books over the course of one year.
- Completion of a *First Call Reporting Form* which needs to be completed and returned to the synod bishop by May 1 of each year. The form provides a template for outlining continuing education plans, mentoring, and the reading list.

First Call Learning Modules

Year One

Leadership Skills

- leadership vs. management
- coaching/mentoring skills
- leader as generator & communicator of vision/ as change agent
- communication skills

Vocational Skills:

- time management
- personal spiritual development tools for rostered leaders
- self-care—physical, emotional, mental self-care

Spiritual Leadership Skills:

- foundational skills for the nurture of discipleship in congregational life:
 - teaching prayer
 - fostering biblical literacy
 - equipping for evangelism
 - catechesis
 - spiritual direction

Ecclesiology/Organizational Behavior

- context tools
- tools for study of congregational structure & culture
- NCD as an evaluative tool
- congregational life cycle
- redevelopment/mission development tools

Year Two:

Congregation-based Community Organizing (CBCO) Skills

- one-to-one relational meetings
- effective meetings
- power, self-interest, WALL vs. WAISB
- One on One and house meetings as group process for cultivating leadership & missional identity

Purpose, Mission, Guiding Principles

- purpose & mission statements & the difference between them
- Transforming Congregations methodology for generating statements

Year Three:

Missional Identity:

- Mission events

Stewardship

- stewardship practicum

Discernment of Call:

- evaluation of present call
- change in call- transitions