

# **Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling and Clinical Education**

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**Endorsement Standards and Procedures**

**Call  
Criteria**

**Program Guidelines Revised  
and Adopted**

**Congregational & Synodical  
Mission**

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# Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling and Clinical Education Ecclesiastical Endorsement Manual

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Overview

This document outlines the process and procedures for ecclesiastical endorsement for ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education, by which the ELCA affirms and recognizes individuals who attain the necessary levels of theological and ministerial competence. It sets forth criteria for the extension of calls and appointments to ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education, hereafter referred to as MCPCCE. Additionally, it presents guidelines for MCPCCE programs in affiliated or recognized social ministry organizations.

### B. Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education

“Rejoice with those who rejoice;  
weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12:15)

Ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education reach directly into the primary social structures and institutions of our world. As they encounter people in the midst of these everyday settings, those who serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education seek to extend the love of God in Jesus Christ to persons – any and all persons – at the point of their deepest need. We are seeking to identify and nurture committed persons who are commissioned or ordained and are interested in exploring these meaningful and challenging expressions of the church’s mission.

#### 1. Rooted in the Gospel

“... as you have done it to one of the least of these...” (Matthew 25) The focus of ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education begins with human need, addressed by God’s love in Jesus Christ. These ministries are missional by nature and are a part of the church’s outreach ministry to the ill, the imprisoned, the elderly, the troubled, the conflicted, and the afflicted.

## 2. Diverse, Scattered and Specialized

In touching lives at so many points of mission, ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education are diverse, specialized, and geographically scattered. They extend into such settings as health care, long-term care, mental health, corrections, pastoral counseling, clinical education, rehabilitation and physical medicine, hospice, substance abuse, developmental disability, emergency services, and workplace ministry.

Ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education assist persons in their relationship to God, and to fellow human beings, and in understanding themselves in the midst of need. Those involved in these ministries declare and demonstrate Christ's love by providing spiritual and pastoral care, advocacy, and opportunities for service, often to many not recognizing the God-given dignity of each person.

### C. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide:

- I. Consistency and continuity with ELCA doctrines of ministry and the authority of those who minister, as defined in ecclesiastical endorsement.
- II. Policies, process, and procedures to assure and uphold the standards and criteria for ecclesiastical endorsement.
- III. Qualifying criteria and procedures for call or appointment, or other means of formal ecclesiastical relationships, for positions of service in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education ministries, including roles and responsibilities for accountability.
- IV. Program guidelines for qualified pastoral care ministry services in affiliated/recognized social ministry organizations, along with means to assure and uphold these program standards.
- V. Addenda for criteria and procedures for ecclesiastical endorsement in regard to:
  - a. Evaluating educational preparation
  - b. Continuation and review
  - c. Reinstatement
  - d. Selection of conveners for area MCPCCE consultation committees
  - e. Process for appealing consultation committee recommendations.

# I. Ecclesiastical Endorsement: Definition, Roles, Core Standards, and Procedures

## A. Definition of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Ecclesiastical endorsement is the recognition by the ELCA that a rostered person has met standards for theological and ministerial competence to serve in ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical pastoral education. It attests to the ELCA's assessment that an individual possesses the suitability, readiness, competence, and aptitude to serve as its representative in a particular ministry. Ecclesiastical endorsement also signifies good standing on the ELCA's roster of ordained, commissioned, and consecrated ministers, and as such is subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the ELCA.

The ecclesiastical endorsement process enables the ELCA to provide guidance and support for persons seeking to enter or serving in MCPCCE. The goal is to provide consultation both to synods and other calling sources in their consideration of call eligibility, and to individuals who are seeking recognition of their competence to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education ministries.

Endorsement is the approved means for the ELCA to provide the ecclesiastical endorsement required by professional certifying organizations, certain employment organizations, and synods. Ecclesiastical MCPCCE endorsement is a function of the church and therefore is distinguished from the certification and/or credentialing for competence granted by a professional organization. Ecclesiastical MCPCCE endorsement is different from other usages of the term "endorsement." For example, endorsement is used in the ELCA for candidates preparing for ordained ministry.

### 1. Limits of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Ecclesiastical endorsement does not guarantee that professional certification will be achieved or that a call to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education will be issued.

It does not establish an employment, an agency, or a supervisory relationship between the endorsing synod and the minister receiving the endorsement. It does not imply or ensure that the endorsed person has undergone any background or the ELCA checks, screening, psychological testing, or evaluation as part of the ecclesiastical endorsement process, though these are all regarded as highly valuable and their use by synods is recommended.

## B. Roles and Responsibilities: A Partnership Process

Responsibility for various parts of the ecclesiastical endorsement process is shared by a number of individuals and groups. These shared responsibilities are designed to provide a standardized process for the ELCA and to provide appropriate support and direction to the applicant.

## 1. Role of the Area MCPCCCE Consultation Committee

After receiving the completed “Personal Data” application form, and other required written materials, the area MCPCCCE consultation committee meets in person with applicants seeking ecclesiastical endorsement. Committees are normally geographically dispersed by regions throughout the United States.

The overall role of the committee is to provide consultation, both to synods and the applicant, and to support the applicant in the achievement of his or her goals for ministry. Committee members and applicant enter into dialogue regarding theological and ministerial readiness for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education.

Each area consultation committee has a convener, who receives the required materials from MCPCCCE Program Director and arranges for the consultation committee interview. The convener is also available to the applicant for personal consultation regarding the procedures or other matters of concern to the applicant about the process.

Formation and organization of the consultation committee is normally the responsibility of the area convener. The consultation committee is selected from a pool of persons who have expertise in MCPCCCE. It normally consists of 3 to 5 members. The committee convener will strongly encourage a representative from the applicant’s synod to attend.

The area consultation committee is responsible for evaluating the individual’s readiness to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical pastoral education ministry. It also provides guidance and counsel on methods and resources for acquiring the necessary theological and ministerial competencies if they are not met. The committee also seeks to assess the applicant’s integration of Lutheran theology, ministerial practice, personal maturity, the understanding of ministry identity, and denominational policies.

On the basis of its assessment of the readiness and suitability of an applicant to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education ministry, the consultation committee makes a recommendation regarding ecclesiastical endorsement along with other recommendations pertaining to the applicant’s ministerial growth and development. The committee may act to recommend endorsement, or to not recommend endorsement.

The convener is responsible for preparing the written report of the interview, with the consultation committee’s recommendations regarding ecclesiastical endorsement, and for sending it to the applicant’s MCPCCCE office. CSM Staff conveys these recommendations in summary form to the applicant and to the synod office.

## 2. Role of the ELCA Synod

The synod is responsible for providing ongoing support and ecclesiastical supervision for persons serving in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education, and to extend calls to their ministries. As part of the partnership of the ecclesiastical endorsement process, a synod may nominate a qualified person to serve as convener for the area consultation committee(s).

The applicant requests a letter of support from the bishop indicating the individual's roster standing and attesting to the synod's role in ecclesiastical supervision. The synod is invited and strongly encouraged to name a representative to serve on each area consultation committee whenever an individual from that synod meets with the committee.

The summary of the report and recommendations of the consultation committee is forwarded to the synod by the MCPCCE Program Director. The synod bishop reviews the recommendation of the consultation committee and provides a written statement regarding the action to the MCPCCE Program Director. This process grants ecclesiastical endorsement and authorizes MCPCCE Program Director to transmit ecclesiastical endorsement upon request of the applicant.

If the synod bishop disagrees with the recommendation of the consultation committee, a discussion ensues involving the synod and MCPCCE Program Director, along with the applicant as necessary. If the disagreement is not resolved, a second consultation committee interview may be arranged.

### 3. Role of the MCPCCE Program Director

The MCPCCE Program Director is responsible for the administration of the ecclesiastical endorsement process and for providing initial information and counsel to applicants. The MCPCCE Program Director develops and distributes the informational materials used by synods in interpreting the ecclesiastical endorsement process and procedures to applicants.

After receiving completed application materials, the MCPCCE Program Director assigns the applicant's materials to an area convener, and provides counsel and guidance as needed to the convener.

Following the applicant's interview with the consultation committee, the MCPCCE Program Director reviews the report and recommendations, and provides a confidential summary to the synod and applicant. Upon receipt of the written decision on ecclesiastical endorsement by the synod bishop, the candidate receives a Certificate of Ecclesiastical Endorsement. In the case of a denial of ecclesiastical endorsement, the candidate is informed in writing. The MCPCCE Program Director is responsible for transmitting ecclesiastical endorsement on behalf of the ELCA to external credentialing/certifying or employing organizations, and synods or other calling sources, at the request of either the endorsee or synod.

The MCPCCE Program Director shall oversee the process of endorsed ministers obtaining certification/credentialing within three years of their MCPCCE ecclesiastical endorsement.

MCPCCE Program Director shall:

- Send an annual letter to MCPCCE endorsed ministers who have not obtained certification/credentialing, reminding them to submit a report within thirty (30) days that outlines their progress in obtaining certification/credentialing within three years of the date of their ecclesiastical endorsement. A copy shall be sent to the minister's bishop.



- If the minister does not submit the report, the minister's MCPCCE Program Director shall send a letter to the minister's bishop, requesting compliance in submitting the report.
- If the minister neglects to submit the report within thirty (30) days after contact from the bishop's office, the MCPCCE Program Director shall recommend to the bishop to withdraw the minister's ecclesiastical endorsement.

### C. Ecclesiastical Endorsement - Core Standards

The core standards are considered basic requirements for ecclesiastical endorsement by the ELCA. Additional standards specifically related to chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education are included in PART II.

The MCPCCE Program Director assesses and determines the completion of Standards A-F. The convener and consultation committee have responsibility for the assessment of Standard G.

#### 1. Standard A - Rostering

All applicants for ecclesiastical endorsement must be rostered or eligible for active rostering.

#### 2. Standard B - Congregational Service

It is normative for ELCA ordained applicants to have served in a congregational setting for at least three years prior to entering MCPCCE. An applicant seeking an exception from this expectation must petition the roster committee of the Conference of Bishops. Rostered commissioned and consecrated ministers must give evidence of three years of active involvement and service in congregational life before entering an MCPCCE ministry.

#### 3. Standard C – Synod

A letter from the synod bishop confirming the applicant's current roster status and the role of the synod in ecclesiastical supervision is required.

#### 4. Standard D - Education Preparation

All applicants must hold at least a baccalaureate degree and a graduate degree in theology from an accredited institution.

In addition, a minimum of 1600 hours of documented supervised clinical pastoral education is required. Criteria for evaluating educational preparation are outlined in Addendum I.

## 5. Standard E – Professional Certification/Credentialing

Applicants are to submit an annual plan for obtaining certification/credentialing within three (3) years by a recommended professional organization. (See I.A.1. Limits of Ecclesiastical Endorsement; I.E. Professional Certification/Credentialing Requirement; II.A.2 Specific Criteria and Standards)

## 6. Standard F - Required Written Materials

Materials should be submitted in the following order:

- a. Personal Data Form (provided by the MCPCCE office).
- b. Personal history essay of the applicant's life and spiritual journey, including an understanding of how one's history impacts and influences one's ministerial and personal functioning.
- c. Description of the applicant's vocational goals.
- d. Documentation of the clinical and academic education that serves as preparation for the ministry for which ecclesiastical endorsement is sought, including supervisory reports and self-evaluations of the educational experiences.
- e. A statement of the applicant's theology of pastoral care. This statement should address how the individual understands chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education to be a ministry of the ELCA, including attention to its contribution to the mission of the ELCA.

Note: This statement is to be brief (two-four pages), but is to reflect the applicant's understanding of ministerial practice within the Lutheran theological tradition. The statement should reflect a perspective that acknowledges the existence and consequences of sin in the human condition, the dynamics of justification by grace through faith, the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, the sense of the applicant's religious/pastoral identity, and the use of religious resources in ministry.

- f. Two (2) descriptions or verbatims of visits/relationships that demonstrate the applicant's integration and application of theological and ministerial understandings in the specific ministry for which ecclesiastical endorsement is sought.
- g. Letter or statement from the synod bishop indicating the applicant's current roster status and the role of the synod in ecclesiastical supervision.
- h. A signed statement that the applicant has carefully reviewed the synod's polity statement on sexual misconduct and agrees to abide by it.
- i. Manuscript, notes or tape of a recent sermon or devotion.
- j. Plan for obtaining professional certification/credentialing within three (3) years by a recommended professional organization. (See I.A.1. Limits of Ecclesiastical Endorsement; I.E. Professional Certification/Credentialing Requirement; II.A.2 Specific Criteria and Standards)

## 7. Standard G - Ministerial and Theological Competence

Individuals are expected to demonstrate the following ministerial and theological competencies through written materials and in the personal interview with the area MCPCCCE consultation committee.

- a. Ministerial/Religious Identity  
Develop a clear formation and integration of Lutheran identity with personal and ministerial identity.
- b. Interpersonal Competence  
Demonstrate one's ability to form personal and pastoral care relationships that emphasize mutuality of personhood and offer support, challenge, and clarification to others. Demonstrate the ability to be compassionate, emotionally available, and sensitive to the joys and struggles of persons as appropriate within the ministerial role.
- c. Theological Competence  
Demonstrate knowledge and the ability to address pastoral care and ethical issues from a Lutheran perspective with attention to the applicant's ministry setting.
- d. Self-Awareness  
Demonstrate awareness of the influence of one's history, faith journey, and personality in using one's self in ministry. The applicant should also demonstrate an ability to establish healthy boundaries for ministerial relationships and self-care.
- e. Authority and Leadership  
Articulate and appropriately claim one's professional and personal authority and leadership in service of the Gospel.
- f. Educational Competence  
Demonstrate the ability to communicate as an educator and consultant with peers, fellow staff, community religious leaders, and the community at large.
- g. Integrative Competence  
Provide evidence of the integration of clinical knowledge and method with theological and ministerial understandings of the human condition.

#### D. Steps in the Process of Obtaining Ecclesiastical Endorsement

1. The applicant requests an information packet from the ELCA's MCPCCE Program Director.
  - The applicant prepares required materials. (See Standard F for a listing of the required materials.) The applicant should consult with MCPCCE Program Director when questions or concerns arise.
  - The applicant requests that the synod bishop write a letter to the MCPCCE Program Director to confirm current roster status and identify the process of ecclesiastical supervision and support.
2. The applicant submits a completed copy of the required materials to the MCPCCE Program Director.
3. MCPCCE Program Director reviews and processes the materials.
  - MCPCCE Program Director determines that the materials are complete.
  - MCPCCE Program Director authorizes the convening of a consultation committee located in an area agreed upon by the applicant. The original copy of the materials is kept for the applicant's personal file by the MCPCCE Program Director. Copies are sent to the convener and each committee member.
  - MCPCCE Program Director informs the applicant that the convener has been contacted.
4. The applicant contacts the convener to establish a mutually suitable time for the consultation. In consultation with the convener, the applicant may suggest an individual to serve on the consultation committee.
5. The convener arranges a consultation committee meeting and selects committee members who are familiar with chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education ministry and, whenever possible, are rostered Lutherans who are also endorsed in the ELCA and hold professional certification.
  - a. The convener shall invite a representative of the applicant's synod. In most instances, the consultation committee consists of 3 to 5 members.
6. The consultation is intended to be a collegial gathering where the applicant and committee members may process the applicant's materials or other topics raised by the applicant or committee members.
  - The consultation committee and the applicant reflect on the applicant's personal history, educational background, personality, theological understandings, pastoral identity, personal integrity, and attitudes.
  - The committee assesses the applicant's theological integration, ministerial practices and church relationship, and overall readiness for ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education.

- Feedback and counsel are provided concerning the applicant's understanding of Lutheran theology, theological integration, pastoral/ministerial identity, and church relationship. The committee will also provide recommendations for future personal and professional growth.
  - The consultation committee makes one of the following recommendations:
    - Ecclesiastical Endorsement recommended. (The applicant meets the standards and possesses adequate theological and ministerial competence in all areas assessed.)
    - Ecclesiastical Endorsement not recommended. (The applicant has not sufficiently met the standards. The specific area(s) that need further development and growth will be identified in the convener's report. The applicant shall provide to the MCPCCE Program Director a plan for meeting endorsement standards and the committee's recommendations. The convener's report and applicant's plan shall be provided to subsequent consultation committees.)
  - The convener shall share the recommendation of the committee with the applicant at the conclusion of the meeting.
  - It is suggested that the committee offer assistance to the applicant in processing the committee's recommendation.
7. The convener shall forward the recommendation of the consultation committee to the applicant's MCPCCE Program Director within fourteen (14) days.
- The MCPCCE Program Director sends an evaluation form regarding the consultation process to the applicant.
  - The MCPCCE Program Director writes a confidential summary to the applicant and to the applicant's synod bishop within seven (7) days of receipt of the convener's report.
  - The synod bishop reviews the confidential summary and acts to confirm or deny the recommendation of the committee.
  - If the applicant and/or the synod bishop do not agree with the committee's recommendation, a second consultation may be offered.
  - If confirmed by the synod bishop, the MCPCCE Program Director prepares a certificate of ecclesiastical endorsement to be signed by the MCPCCE representative and the applicant's synod bishop. The synod bishop is encouraged to present the certificate to the applicant in person.
  - MCPCCE Program Director forwards an acknowledgement of ecclesiastical endorsement to appropriate certifying or employing organizations, other synods, or other entities as requested by the applicant.

#### E. Professional Certification/Credentialing Requirement

Individuals endorsed in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education are required to obtain and maintain, or be in the process of obtaining, certification/credentialing from a

professional pastoral care organization. The collegiality and opportunities for professional growth and development offered through professional certifying associations provide vital support. By requiring professional certification, the church entrusts the assessment of professional skills, conceptual knowledge, and competence in ministry for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education to a certifying organization. It also recognizes that these organizations offer means of accountability for professional practice based upon a professional code of ethics. It also provides support and relationships in a professional context.

Ecclesiastically endorsed ministers for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education will receive annual reminders from their national MCPCCE Program Director, requesting a report that outlines their progress in obtaining certification/credentialing within three (3) years of the date of their ecclesiastical endorsement. Non-compliance will result in the withdrawal of ecclesiastical endorsement (See I.A.1. Limits of Ecclesiastical Endorsement; II.A.2. Specific Criteria and Standards)

### 1. Forwarding of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Individuals needing a letter of ecclesiastical endorsement sent to a certifying or employing organization or to a synod should request in writing confirmation of their ecclesiastical endorsement from the MCPCCE Program Director.

### 2. Continuation and Review of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

It is recommended that ecclesiastical endorsement is reviewed when an individual seeks a change in specialization or during the process of receiving a new call. The MCPCCE Program Director, under criteria developed by the MCPCCE, will guide the nature of this review. These criteria are indicated in Addendum II.

### 3. Termination of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Ecclesiastical endorsement is automatically terminated when a chaplain, pastoral counselor, or clinical educator loses ecclesiastical roster status.

Professional certification is a function of a professional organization external to the church and is forfeited if ecclesiastical endorsement is withdrawn by the ELCA.

An endorsed person's plan for professional certification must be presented to the MCPCCE Program Director annually or ecclesiastical endorsement will be withdrawn (See I.A.1. Limits of Ecclesiastical Endorsement; I.E. Professional Certification/Credentialing Requirement; II.A.2 Specific Criteria and Standards)

If an MCPCCE minister loses professional certification, the minister must promptly report this to the MCPCCE Program Director and also submit a plan for renewed certification in order to retain ecclesiastical endorsement. These criteria are indicated in Addendum III.

## II. Standards and Criteria for Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling and Clinical Education

### A. Ministry in Chaplaincy

#### 1. Description

Chaplaincy is a ministry of the church that is missional in nature and is characterized contextually and given expression in a wide variety of diverse and specialized settings. This expression of ministry embodies the church's initiative in ministry, among others, to the ill, the imprisoned, the elderly, the troubled, the conflicted, the afflicted, and the addicted. Ecclesiastically endorsed ELCA chaplains offer a particular ministry to persons in pluralistic and multicultural contexts that are characterized and undergirded by Lutheran theology and traditions.

#### 2. Specific Criteria and Standards

- Articulate an understanding and integration of Lutheran theology that undergirds one's ministry in a chaplaincy setting, and yet demonstrates an openness and sensitivity to all faith groups.
- Articulate and demonstrate a ministerial ability to utilize the expressions of the ELCA in chaplaincy ministry, i.e., prayer, sacraments, scripture, rites and rituals.
- Articulate an awareness of, appreciation for, and an expertise in regard to the distinctive and unique nature and characteristics of the setting within which ministry is delivered.
- Demonstrate an ability to deliver competent ministry in a pluralistic, multicultural, and multi-disciplined environment.
- Demonstrate an ability to establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.
- Develop and foster collaborative relationships with community clergy and faith group leaders.
- Include a plan to obtain professional certification within three years from the time of ecclesiastical endorsement from a professional chaplaincy organization. An external certifying credential is required to maintain ecclesiastical endorsement as a chaplain and may be obtained by a recognized professional organization such as:
  - American Correctional Chaplain's Association (ACCA)
  - Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
  - College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP)
  - National Institute of Business and Industrial Chaplains (NIBIC)

## B. Ministry in Pastoral Counseling

### 1. Description

Pastoral counseling is defined by the church bodies as a ministry of counseling conducted by an authorized representative of the ELCA who establishes a professional therapeutic role using both psychological and theological frames of reference to observe, understand, interpret, and foster healing and wholeness in the process. There is a dual nature to the pastoral counselor's role-identity and expertise. The pastoral counselor participates fully in a pastoral/theological as well as a counseling/psychological process. As such, a pastoral counselor must be dually credentialed, both by the church body as a rostered minister, and by a professional organization or by a government board recognized for certifying competence in counseling.

The roles and responsibilities of the pastoral counselor allow for a wide variety of ministry activities including individual, marriage, family, and group counseling, as well as education in mental health, wellness, wholeness, and family life. Pastoral counseling, rooted in the Word and Sacrament ministry of the church, is an intrinsic part of the health and healing ministry of the church, seeking to foster spiritual wholeness and mental health as a style of ministry integrated into the total mission of the church.

### 2. Specific Criteria and Standards

- a. The credential of certification is required by a professional counseling organization. An external certifying credential is required to maintain ecclesiastical endorsement as a pastoral counselor and may be obtained by a recognized professional organization such as:
  - American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
  - American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
  - American Psychological Association (APA)
  - Association of Certified Social Workers (ACSW)
  - College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP)
  - National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
  - National Association of Certified Mental Health Counselors (NACMHC)

Note: State licensure or certification at its highest level has been approved as meeting the certification requirement.

- b. The statement on specialization should relate the applicant's knowledge of contemporary mental health and psychotherapeutic issues, including systemic, social, and community concerns, and concepts of health, healing, wellness, and wholeness from a pastoral theological perspective.



## C. Ministry in Clinical Education

### 1. Description

The ministry of the clinical educator is to teach, guide, and supervise those engaged in learning the art of pastoral care in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education. Such educators include supervisors of Clinical Pastoral Education, Pastoral Counseling Educators, AAPC Diplomates and Fellows, and other certified ministry educators. Certified clinical educators are clinically trained, knowledgeable about learning theory, are competent in program management, and have learned the art of supervision through conceptual models from theology, education, and the behavioral sciences. Clinical educators seek to help students convert experience into learning in integrative ways, to address issues of theological reflection and ministerial formation, and to develop practical skills and tools for ministry. Clinical educators serve not only those preparing for full-time ministries in specialized settings, but also provide pastoral education for seminarians, rostered ministers, and laypersons who seek accredited programs of supervised ministry.

### 2. Specific Criteria and Standards

- a. The statement on specialization should demonstrate the applicant's competence and knowledge in educational/ supervisory issues, including personal and pastoral formation, theological reflection on whole-person learning, group dynamics, education vs. therapy, basic understanding of an institution as a system, the meaning of prophetic intervention, and interfaith and multicultural ministry.
- b. The pastoral relationship descriptions should reflect competence and skill in educational ministry and the ability to maintain one's identity and authority as educator/supervisor.
- c. The credential of certification is required and the support offered by a professional clinical education organization is strongly recommended. An external certifying credential is required to maintain ecclesiastical endorsement as a clinical educator and may be obtained by a recognized professional organization such as:
  - American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
  - Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Inc. (ACPE)
  - Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE)
  - College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP)

### III. Criteria and Procedures for Call

These criteria are recommended basic elements upon which a synod or other calling source may base its determination of call or endorsement to serve in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education. They represent a basic level of expectation by the ELCA regarding qualifications and responsibilities for an MCPCCE ministry before the ELCA will recognize and authorize the MCPCCE ministry.

#### A. Criteria

##### 1. Criteria A: Concept of Ministry

There shall be a clearly articulated concept of ministry that demonstrates the relationship of the work and position in the specialized setting to the purpose of public ministry and to the mission and ministry strategy of both ELCA and synod, or other calling source. This statement should identify the uniqueness and parameters of the office of ministry for the setting, along with the contributions of the ministry to church growth and life.

##### 2. Criteria B: Program of Ministry

There shall be a documented program of ministry consistent with the guidelines for pastoral service programs adopted by the church (See Section IV). Consideration and consultation with the standards of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Pastoral Services (JCAPS) of the Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings is strongly recommended.

##### 3. Criteria C: Ministerial Functions

There shall be a written position description or other document demonstrating that the following elements characterize the ministry:

- a. The position involves substantial use of pastoral care skills, and may include the administration of Word and Sacrament ministry.
- b. The position provides opportunities for the exercise of ministerial leadership in the setting on behalf of the church, including access to the decision-making processes of the setting.
- c. The position affords the minister opportunities to serve as consultant, educator, and/or worship leader within the setting served with community clergy and others in both the religious and wider community, within the limits of accepted denominational practices.

##### 4. Criteria D: Relationship with the Church

There shall be documentation demonstrating that the agency, institution, or other structure for ministry provides:

- a. A context for ministry that exemplifies an identity and connection with the ministry of the ELCA that fits into the mission plans and strategy of the calling source.

- b. A context that values and provides for activities that interpret specialized pastoral care concerns in the wider life of the ELCA, especially in congregations and synods, and in the wider community.

#### 5. Criteria E: Ministry Provisions

The position description or other documentation shall demonstrate support for the following elements related to a chaplain, pastoral counselor, or clinical educator's professional relationship with the agency or institution:

- a. An adequate compensation program, consistent with synod guidelines, should be established. These guidelines will address vacation, personal leave, pension, health benefits, continuing education, housing allowance provision, and Social Security (FICA).
- b. Provisions for adequate leave to attend required ELCA activities and support for involvements in professional societies.
- c. Provisions for continuing education leave and funding compatible with ELCA standards and programs.

#### 6. Criteria F: Ministry Accountability

Ministers in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education shall be accountable to the church in ecclesiastical and theological matters, to the institution/agency in employment matters, and to the certifying organization in professional matters.

The applicant for call is required to provide evidence of a supervisory and accountability system that includes the following elements:

- a. Institutional/Agency Accountability
  - The agency, institution, or other structure provides direct oversight and supervision or arrangements for such supervision. An annual performance review of the chaplain, pastoral counselor, or clinical educator is to be a part of this supervisory process.
- b. Ecclesiastical Accountability
  - Those who serve in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education are expected to fulfill the ELCA standards and expectations of those who serve in public ministry.
  - Those engaged in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education ministries are expected, within the constraints of their full-time ministry responsibilities, to be active members of a congregation in the ELCA. They are also responsible for making themselves and their expertise available to synods, congregations, and rostered workers in the church. Such availability may include regular participating in meetings and committees of rostered leaders, being available as speakers and consultants, and being active

interpreters of specialized pastoral care as an extended ministry of the church in the world.

- They shall submit an annual ministry report to the synod or calling source. This report may include a review of goals and objectives, an analysis of problem areas, a description of personal developments and concerns, interpretation of the nature of the ministry, evidence of participation in the ongoing life of the church and any other areas as determined by the calling source. A personal conference with the synod bishop is strongly recommended.

c. Professional Accountability

- Ongoing maintenance of a certifying credential or certification in process by an appropriate recognized professional certifying organization is required.

7. Criteria G: Ministry Support Plan

One of the goals of the call process is to foster implementation of a system of personal and professional ministry support for the chaplain, pastoral counselor, or clinical educator. Therefore, there should be evidence of a plan for ministry support, normally conceived jointly by minister and calling source. This support system should include covenanted and recognizable forms of support from both the synod, especially the synod bishop, and the MCPCCE Program Director. The plan should also include a service of installation that acknowledges the partners in the support system by including key representatives in the service. In addition, informal mutual support networks of colleagues, friends, and family should be identified as part of the plan.

8. Criteria H: Individual Qualifications

An applicant for ecclesiastical endorsement must meet theological, pastoral and professional standards viewed by the ELCA as an indication of aptitude to serve successfully in the particular ministry position. All applicants for initial MCPCCE ministry calls must have a consultation regarding ecclesiastical endorsement with an area MCPCCE consultation committee (See Section I).

Following consultation, the area MCPCCE consultation committee shall assess the individual's qualifications and aptitude to serve in a particular MCPCCE ministry and give a report to the applicant's MCPCCE Program Director. In subsequent calls or appointments, if the applicant has not received Ecclesiastical Endorsement, consultation(s) shall also be expected. If the applicant has received Ecclesiastical Endorsement, the need for further consultation(s) in subsequent calls shall be reviewed by the calling source in consultation with the MCPCCE Program Director, under criteria developed by the MCPCCE. These criteria are indicated in Addendum II.

B. Procedures

1. For Call

The synod bishop and/or responsible church entity shall set forth criteria that are normative for the recognition, of and extension a call. Synods or other calling sources shall

develop a process along with procedures to evaluate requests for call according to the approved criteria and consistent with the following recommended principles:

- a. The synod bishop, along with others in leadership roles in the synod, normally is to be involved directly in the process, providing support and consultation.
- b. The candidate shall be given opportunity personally to interpret to the appropriate synod structure(s) the ministry of specialized pastoral care for which call is being sought.
- c. The summary report of meeting(s) with the area MCPCCE consultation committee may be part of the call process.

The MCPCCE Program Director shall serve as a source of consultation to calling sources in situations needing interpretation or clarification.

## 2. For Employment

When a Lutheran employing source determines the need for a chaplain, pastoral counselor, or clinical supervisor, the bishop normally will be invited to suggest the names of eligible candidates. After review, the name(s) of the final candidate(s) will be submitted to the bishop to assure the good standing in the ELCA of the candidate(s) and to arrange for consultation regarding ecclesiastical endorsement or review of ecclesiastical endorsement.

Many positions do not involve Lutheran-employing sources, and the bishop may not become involved in the recruitment phase of the employment process. The candidate will inform the bishop of the employment possibility with an employing organization.

Prior to finalizing employment, arrangements may be made for a consultation involving an administrative representative of the employing organization and the bishop. For Lutheran employing organizations, this consultation normally will be part of the collaboration with the synod in the recruitment process. In other situations the candidate shall assume responsibility to initiate arrangements for the consultation. The purpose of this consultation is to clarify the relationship of the church, through its calling source, to the ministry, including the expectations of the church as set forth in the Criteria and Procedures for Call or Appointment.

Within the ELCA, once satisfactory employment arrangements have been made between the candidate and the employing organization, the calling source proceeds with the process for issuing a letter of call for the ministry. The applicant should not accept a position without the assurance of a letter of call or without the contingency that the position will be recognized as a valid ministry. The bishop may be asked to install the candidate to the ministry.

Ecclesiastical endorsement or a call to serve does not establish an employment, agency, or day-to-day employment supervisory relationship between the endorsing synod and the minister receiving the endorsement.

### 3. For Termination of Employment

Termination of employment is the responsibility and at the discretion of the employing organization. The synod bishop may be consulted by the employing organization, and the pastoral care giver is expected to inform the synod bishop of this process. However, all employment decisions are made solely by the employing organization.

## IV. Program Guidelines for Church-Related Organizations

These Program Guidelines are intended to assist Lutheran affiliated or recognized social ministry organizations in planning and structuring specialized pastoral care programs and departments. They can also assist in evaluating current services by comparing them with professional norms adopted by groups such as the Association of Professional Chaplains and the Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings. Other organizations employing Lutheran ministers of specialized pastoral care may find these guidelines adaptable to their setting. The guidelines represent the type and quality of pastoral care expected by the ELCA in affiliated/recognized social ministry organizations.

These guidelines were adapted from the work of the two aforementioned organizations, from the documents of a number of affiliated and/or recognized Lutheran social ministry organizations, and from the work of the Consultation Groups of the Task Force on Development of Standards, Call Criteria, and Endorsement Practices for Specialized Pastoral Care Ministries.

### A. Role of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care of all persons is integral to a comprehensive and holistic approach to ministry. Concern for the spiritual dimension of the client, family, and organizational community is evidenced in the mission and operation of the social ministry organization in the following ways:

1. The mission statement of the organization acknowledges the place and significance of pastoral care and concern in its purpose and function.
2. Policies and procedures of the organization reflect the mission and ministry of the Christian church within the Lutheran tradition.
3. The administration of the organization ensures integration of the Christian perspective in all aspects of decision-making

### B. Pastoral Care Department or Program

Pastoral care is facilitated through and provided by the Pastoral Care Department or Program within the organization. The organization's commitment to provide for the spiritual needs of patients, residents, clients, family members, and staff is demonstrated through the Pastoral Care Department or Program.

The organization demonstrates its commitment in the following ways:

1. Job descriptions are written for all persons within the Pastoral Care Department or Program.
2. The Pastoral Care Department or Program has written policies and procedures.
3. The Pastoral Care Department or Program is clearly identified on the organizational chart.
4. The Director of the Pastoral Care Department or Program is accountable within the organization to executive administrative staff.

5. The Pastoral Care Department or Program has appropriate access to the decision-making process, and is given similar status with other departments within the organization for membership on committees and program development activities.
6. Personnel of the Pastoral Care Department or Program participate as integral members of the inter-disciplinary team of the organization for involvement with treatment, discharge planning, and other issues related to client and family care.
7. The Pastoral Care Department or Program maintains adequate records, consistent with the policies and procedures of the organization and competent pastoral practice.
8. The organization provides for regular review of its compensation programs keeping it consistent with education, training, job responsibilities, judicatory guidelines, and with other professional personnel of the organization.
9. The budget of the Pastoral Care Department or Program is reviewed regularly to ensure that operational, programmatic, and capital needs are met.
10. The Pastoral Care Department or Program is provided with space, furnishings, equipment, and supplies necessary to operate effectively.
11. The organization has a stated personnel ratio of pastoral care staff to patients/residents sufficient to meet and implement the goals and objectives of the Pastoral Care Department or Program.
12. Personnel who have been endorsed and are professionally trained and certified carry out the leadership or supervision of pastoral care staff.

### C. Pastoral Services

The Pastoral Care Department or Program coordinates and facilitates services to meet the spiritual needs of patients, residents, clients, family members, and staff regardless of their faith tradition. Such pastoral care programs include the following elements:

1. An assessment of spiritual issues and concerns of those served.
2. Specialized pastoral care is made available to clients, family, and staff. Examples of pastoral care activities include sacramental ministry, worship, ministerial visitation, groups, Bible study/religious education, advocacy, support, and spiritual counsel.
3. Personnel of the Pastoral Care Department or Program provide a crisis intervention service as appropriate.
4. Personnel of the Pastoral Care Department or Program facilitate the client's understanding of the relationship between physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of their lives.
5. The pastoral care minister recognizes that an institution may be a field where God provides opportunities to respectfully share “the hope that is in us with gentleness and reverence” (I Peter 3:15), while respecting the religious beliefs and spiritual convictions of each person.
6. Personnel of the Pastoral Care Department or Program serve as a resource to clients, family, and staff concerning ethical issues.



7. The Pastoral Care Department or Program serves as consultant and educator with community clergy and others in the religious and wider community.
8. Opportunities for worship and religious education are available to clients of diverse faith traditions within the setting of the organization and/or in congregations in the community as appropriate.

#### D. Quality Assurance

The Pastoral Care Department or Program will have a system to measure the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of its services. The system shall have at least the following components:

1. Administration receives a progress report that monitors program/operational objectives and includes a statement of projected goals on an annual basis.
2. An annual evaluation of the quality of pastoral care provided within the organization is prepared.
3. Supervision of those who provide pastoral care within the organization is managed by the Pastoral Care Department or Program.
4. An annual self-evaluation of the program and personnel of the Pastoral Care Department or Program is facilitated by the organization's administration.

## Addendum I: Criteria for Evaluating Educational Preparation for Ecclesiastical Endorsement

This document outlines the ways and explains the means by which an applicant is expected to meet the requirement of 1,600 hours of supervised clinical education related to ministry in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education, for which the applicant seeks ecclesiastical endorsement. Normally, this education is beyond the M.Div. or other basic requirements for entry into ministry. At least 75% of this educational preparation must be in Category 1.

### A. Category 1: Supervised Pastoral Care and Counseling Practicums

The requirement of 1600 hundred hours of educational preparation is based on the model of 4 units (400 hours each) of clinical pastoral education. In this type of educational preparation both the hours of actual ministerial experience and the time involved in educational and supervisory activities are counted. This method of counting hours shall apply to other closely supervised pastoral care and counseling educational programs, including pastoral counseling case load supervision.

### B. Category 2: Formal Educational Events

Seminars, course work, academic programs, institutes, workshops, and other formal educational events that are not part of a regular on going supervised practicum shall be counted on the basis of actual time at the event, hours of study, preparation of papers, and consultations or presentations.

### C. Category 3: Other Educational Means

Actual ministry practice that does not involve direct clinical/pastoral supervision, such as an experience as a volunteer chaplain or nursing home visitor may be considered part of the educational preparation in certain circumstances. Normally, these forms of education apply to experienced ministers only. Teaching or consultative work, both formal and informal, on topics related to the area of specialization also may be counted in this category.

### D. Documentation

The documentation for educational experience in Categories 1 and 2 should include a description of the program or event, self-evaluations, and supervisory evaluations. The materials should also identify the relevance of the educational program or event to the area of specialization. In Category 3, a statement is expected that identifies the activity and reflects on the effects of the experience as preparation for the area of specialization.

### E. Procedures

MCPCCE Program Director reviews the documentation that is submitted by the applicant. Staff has responsibility for determining whether or not the applicant has met the requirements for educational preparation. Staff may request consultation from an area MCPCCE representative, a convener, or from a MCPCCE consultation committee as a whole or in part in making this determination.

It should be noted that this preceding criteria only applies to the ecclesiastical endorsement process. A certifying and/or employing organization may require additional training and/or preparation.

## Addendum II: Criteria and Procedures for Continuation and Review of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

When there is a change of call the following procedures and criteria shall guide the nature of the review for continuation of ecclesiastical endorsement:

1. The individual seeking continuation and/or the synod requests the review of the MCPCCE Program Director regarding the current status of ecclesiastical endorsement.
2. The individual shall consult with MCPCCE Program Director regarding the existence of any of the following conditions:
  - Roster status problems
  - Misconduct, discipline, or ethical complaints or issues involving a certifying association, an employing organization, or the synod, or of a civil or criminal nature
  - Evidence of significantly lapsed involvement in either the church body or a professional certifying organization
  - Evidence that one or more of the standards for endorsement has not been met
  - Other substantial evidence or questions of pastoral competence or professional integrity
3. If one or more of these conditions exist, a meeting with an area MCPCCE consultation committee normally will be expected. The consultation process is served best when the initiation for the meeting comes from the individual. However, it may be required by the synod upon consultation with the MCPCCE Program Director. Such determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
4. If none of these conditions exist, or if it is judged that a consultation committee meeting is not warranted, the review may be a paper review.

During the change of call process the individual (or synod) requests the MCPCCE Program Director to forward ecclesiastical endorsement to the calling entity. MCPCCE Program Director shall obtain synod confirmation of the previous ecclesiastical endorsement and review the file. If none of the conditions outlined in number two exist, and the previous ecclesiastical endorsement is confirmed by the synod, the MCPCCE Program Director transmits ecclesiastical endorsement to the calling source.

### Addendum III: Criteria and Procedures for Reinstatement of Ecclesiastical Endorsement

The following criteria and procedures shall be used for reinstatement of ecclesiastical endorsement:

1. If termination of ecclesiastical endorsement was due to loss of rostering, the individual must be reinstated to roster standing in the church body in order to apply for reinstatement of ecclesiastical endorsement.
2. If termination was due to loss of certification, the individual must be involved actively in seeking reinstatement with that professional organization or seeking certification in a different organization. Monthly progress reports must/shall be submitted to the MCPCCE Program Director.
3. Application for reinstatement is accomplished by writing a detailed description of the process that resulted in termination of ecclesiastical endorsement, along with evidence of reinstatement to the church body roster or reinstatement of certification, plus the rationale for desiring reinstatement of ecclesiastical endorsement. The application must include written support from the bishop.
4. The meeting with a consultation committee regarding reinstatement of ecclesiastical endorsement will address those issues that led to loss of endorsement.
5. The consultation process is served best when the initiative for a meeting with a consultation committee comes from the individual. However, it may be required by synod upon consultation with MCPCCE Program Director.
6. If a consultation committee meeting is held, the materials to be submitted include the application for reinstatement document, plus other materials relevant to the individual situation as determined by MCPCCE Program Director or applicant.
7. If MCPCCE Program Director deems that a consultation committee meeting is not warranted, MCPCCE Program Director reviews the written application, consults with the applicant and others, and makes a recommendation to the synod regarding reinstatement of ecclesiastical endorsement.

## Addendum IV: Criteria for Selection of Conveners for Area MCPCCE Consultation Committees

Conveners are appointed by the MCPCCE Program Director, who oversees the services of the conveners. The criteria used in selecting conveners will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Currently endorsed
2. Certification by a recognized professional organization as listed in the Standards
3. A minimum of three years of service in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling or clinical education
4. Strong visible ties with ELCA and a sense of Lutheran identity as a chaplain, pastoral counselor or clinical educator
5. Experience as a member of an ecclesiastical endorsement committee and/or other peer review processes
6. Individual qualities such as conscientiousness, attentiveness to paperwork, ongoing familiarity with endorsement standards, knowledge of area personnel resources, familiarity with the committee process, and ability to lead, mobilize, and interpret

Conveners will be appointed for a five-year term of office, with the possibility of one reappointment to a second five-year term. No convener shall serve longer than ten years consecutively.

The MCPCCE Program Director may replace conveners previously appointed. Reasons for replacement may include, but are not limited to, geographic inaccessibility, loss of ecclesiastical endorsement or professional certification, or personal limitations.

## ADDENDUM V: Appealing a Consultation Committee Recommendation

An applicant wishing to appeal a consultation committee recommendation must notify the MCPCCE Program Director in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of the applicant's consultation. The grounds upon which the appeal is based shall be presented in writing at that time.

Within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receiving the appeal, the MCPCCE representative will acknowledge reception of the written appeal and notify the area convener and the appellant's synod bishop of the appeal.

The national MCPCCE representative shall assist the appellant within thirty (30) days in reviewing the recommendation of the consultation committee and to clarify the grounds for appeal and the MCPCCE Endorsement Standards and Procedures relevant to the appeal.

The appellant may request a new committee consultation. A new committee may be convened at the discretion of the MCPCCE Program Director. The MCPCCE Program Director will establish a new convener and committee. The subsequent committee convener shall have access to the previous committee's report. The appellant's MCPCCE representative and bishop or designee may attend the new committee meeting as observers and support to the appellant.

The recommendation of the appeals process shall be final.