

## 2010-2: Called to Specialized Ministry

- WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution 7.41.12. states under Initial Call to Congregational Service: “Because the responsibilities of the office of the ordained ministry are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ordained service, initial service of at least three years shall be in the parish ministry in this church. Exceptions may be granted under criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council,” and,
- WHEREAS, the maturity and life experience of older seminary students are acknowledged in the process of seeking an exemption to the three-year rule, but seminarians who have a passion for chaplaincy and other specialized ministries are nevertheless faced with the additional challenge of navigating a process that does not encourage them to excel in their area of interest, and
- WHEREAS, the current model is one of consecutive service, in which pastors serve first in a congregational setting before moving into non-parish ministry, and in which they may have little or no formal connection to or support from a congregation throughout the remainder of their ordained service, and
- WHEREAS, the congregation is the heart of the church, and pastors have more natural connections to the ELCA through their congregations than through non-congregational ministries, and
- WHEREAS, the church is missing an opportunity to connect those in specialized ministries with parish pastors,
- RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod request the candidacy committee, in consultation with those in specialized ministry settings and others, to review the current process to specialized ministry, and make recommendations to the 2011 Saint Paul Area Synod assembly regarding the option of *concurrent* parish service, rather than *consecutive* service. In this model, instead of being required to serve three years in congregational ministry *prior to* being called to specialized ministry, pastors could be ordained to a non-parish ministry, and be linked with a congregation concurrently with their service in specialized ministry settings.

*Adopted by the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly, May 22, 2010*