



**Metropolitan New York Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**LETTER OF AGREEMENT**  
**FOR SYNOD DEACONS DURING A PASTORAL TRANSITION**

**In prayerful conversation, the Congregation Council and the Transitional Pastor have discussed the Healthy Transitions section of the MNYS Guide for Pastoral Transitions and Call Process, and enter into the following covenant agreement:**

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(congregation)

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(town)

**Agrees with**

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(Synod Deacon)

**To serve as Synod Deacon**

**During these times of transition, it is not uncommon for the congregation to rely more upon Synod Deacons for leadership and support. However, it is important for both the Synod Deacon and the Congregation Council, to recognize that Synod Deacons are NOT temporary Pastors, nor should they act or perform as such. All Pastoral situations brought to the attention of the Synod Deacon shall be directed to the Interim or Coverage Pastor and/or the Conference Dean.**

1. If the Synod Deacon wishes to continue in their call at that location, they may do so under the following stipulations:
  - a) The Interim or Coverage Pastor, or the Conference Dean in the absence of an Interim Pastor, must agree to become the supervisor for the Synod Deacon.

- b) The Synod Deacon and the Congregation Council must enter into a covenant agreement.
- c) At the heart of the ministry of Synod Deacons are public works of mercy, witness, and worship in solidarity with those needing to be served. The actual tasks undertaken by members of the Synod Diaconate will vary according to the gifts and skills of the Synod Deacon, and the needs of the church and its surrounding community. For example: in our neighborhoods, there are sick and shut-in people to be visited; people in need of helpful conversation as well as physical and spiritual assistance; children and adults to be nurtured and taught, the people of the community who are not members of the congregation to be served and evangelized; the homeless, hungry, addicted, isolated and imprisoned to be befriended and served; and so many among whom the worship of Almighty God ought to be extended. Synod Deacons also serve in word and deed as advocates for those whose voices must be heard.
- d) Synod Deacons may assume a leadership role in worship, but this is not to be their primary responsibility. Rather, the serving function of Synod Deacons in the Church's liturgy is to be a reflection of their tangible servanthood in parish and world, **"To Live Like Christ in the Community."**
- e) Synod Deacons shall neither preside at the Holy Eucharist nor pronounce absolution in worship. They shall not administer Holy Baptism, except in an emergency, nor officiate at funerals, except at the direction of a Supervising Pastor, though they are encouraged to assist at both. They shall not officiate at weddings but are encouraged to participate when invited to do so in consultation with their Pastor/Supervisor. They shall not regularly preach yet will on occasion preach in cases where an ordained Pastor is unavailable, where they have received special training in homiletics, and have prepared to preach under the supervision of a Pastor.
- f) Members of the Synod Diaconate are urged to lead the congregation in such historically diaconal roles as the Kyrie, the prayers of the church, preparation of the altar for the Lord's Supper, receiving the offerings of the people, and distribution of the Holy Eucharist. These tasks are not to be undertaken to usurp the privilege of other congregation members to serve as assisting ministers, but rather to serve, wherever possible, as a living example and a reminder to the congregation of our common baptismal calling to priestly service in the world.
- g) Description of specific responsibilities to be accomplished by the Deacon:

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- h) A member of the Synod Diaconate Council (SDC) will attend a regular meeting of the Congregational Council. This agreement will be reviewed and questions, if any, will be answered. If all parties understand and agree to the contents of the agreement, it will be signed and then given back to the SDC for referral to the Bishop.
- i) The Bishop must approve the Covenant Agreement.
- j) When the congregation calls a new Pastor, the Synod Deacon must submit an application to go "On Leave From Call." It will be effective on the new Pastor's date of call, and will last for a period of at least six months. It is important for the Synod Deacon to recognize, that now is the time for the new Pastor to become acclimated to their new call.

We, the undersigned, accept the terms of this agreement:

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Synod Deacon

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Date

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Congregation Council President or Secretary

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Date

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Interim Pastor / Conference Dean

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Date

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SDC Chairperson

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Date

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*(Attested by)* Bishop of Metropolitan New York Synod

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Date

Upon signature of the Bishop, copies will be distributed by the Synod Office:

- I. Original to the Interim Pastor / Conference Dean
- II. Copy to the Synod Deacon
- III. Copy to the Congregation Council President
- IV. Copy to the Chair of the Synod Diaconate Council
- V. Copy on file in the Office of the Bishop