

POLICY AND PROCESS REGARDING CONGREGATION RELOCATION

Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

Authority to establish this policy and process derives from ELCA and Synod Constitutions provisions, Evangelical Outreach/Congregational Mission (EO/CM) unit policy, and guidelines in +S6.03 and S11.01.10. The purpose of this policy and process is to affirm the interdependence of the church and to encourage healthy new starts.

A. Preliminary Considerations

1. Congregations, Committee for Evangelism and Outreach (CEO), or Assistants to the Bishop are to consult with the bishop before any steps are taken that would lead to a relocation of a congregation.
2. If relocation is considered, the bishop will designate the synod's Director for Evangelical Mission (Assistant to the Bishop and EO/CM staff person) the responsibility to advise the congregation in studying the proposed relocation and preparation of the appropriate materials and documentation relating to the relocation.

B. Proposed Relocation Documentation and Approval

3. The congregation will complete the Rationale for Congregational Relocation and submit it to the synod's Director for Evangelical Mission for analysis and recommendation to the synod Committee for Evangelism and Outreach.
4. This analysis will be forwarded to the Committee for Evangelism and Outreach of the synod, who in turn will study, review and make recommendation to the Synod Council for final action.
5. Approval of relocation is required by:
 - a. the congregation voting at a meeting called according to its constitution
 - b. the Synod Council
 - c. EO/CM if the congregation applies for building and real estate consultation, or an ELCA Mission Investment Fund construction loan or partnership support.

C. Relocation

6. All parties, the congregation, synod, EO/CM, shall commit to a letter of agreement, the terms, and individual and mutual responsibilities in the relocation.
7. Relocation should be accomplished within two years of synod approval. Application for an extension may be made on a year to year basis.

Committee for Outreach – 2/8/96

Synod Council – 3/30/96

Proposed amendments from Committee for Evangelism and Outreach – 9/10/08

Synod Council – 2/21/09

RATIONALE FOR CONGREGATIONAL RELOCATION

Name of Congregation _____

Address _____

Conference _____ ELCA Identification # _____

Please provide detailed responses to the following:

1. Believing that change in the Church and our mission is driven by the Holy Spirit, describe how you believe God has led your congregation to pursue this relocation application process.
2. Offer specific evidence and signs of your congregation's will for mission, as opposed to a will for institutional survival.
3. Apart from a new building and site, what plans do you have for your ministry to be different in a new place?
4. Describe your present and proposed future service areas (geographic, demographic, etc.).
5. Describe the anticipated impact of relocation on the present membership along with a plan for ministry with members grieving and/or not relocating.
6. What are your plans for the disposition of the current facilities, obtaining future facilities, financing and servicing potential indebtedness and/or outstanding claims on the assets of the congregation, and an anticipated timeline for relocation?
7. Assess the anticipated impact of relocation upon neighboring ELCA congregations in the present and proposed relocation area by documenting specific conversations (dates, locations, names, etc.) with conference gatherings and, by necessity, neighboring congregational officers in the proposed relocation area. (If the proposed relocation area is close to or in another conference, there should also be conversation with them.) Congregations of full communion partners of the ELCA located within reasonable distance of the proposed relocation area should also be consulted for this assessment.