**NEPA SYNOD**

**6261 MINISTRY COMMUNITY COVENANT TEMPLATE**

**NAME OF 6261 BUNDLE**

**DURATION**

The duration of this pilot as a 6261 Ministry Community will be for 2 or 3 years , from \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Covenant is to create an understanding of the commitments of the \_\_\_\_ area “Name of Bundle” churches to form a 6261 Ministry Community. Part of this understanding includes the hope, we as Christians, profess in the promises of God and our call to share those promises with others in our communities.

Similarly, this group of congregations, along with the NEPA Synod strive to live into that call by collaborating with one another as partners in the Gospel and the vision that 6261 Ministry Communities promote vitality for its congregations by providing:

* Insight into the Church universal as congregations partner together for the sake of the Gospel, reaching beyond their individual doors into the broader community.
* Increased opportunities for worship, Bible study, small groups, service, fellowship, and other faith practices.
* A collective pool of resources to support full-time pastors and deacons, in a time of clergy shortage and in a way that supports clergy health, as well as additional ministry staff such as musicians, Christian education, administration, and more.
* A training structure for lay ministers and interns, allowing for a natural flow of trained leadership – some of whom may discern a call to public, rostered ministry.
* A means for staff and members to practice teamwork in a familiar network as they rely on one another to fully support and sustain ministry.
* Built-in support for re-identifying values, mission, and community in the wake of Covid-19 and an ever-changing social and cultural landscape.
* A deeper and broader training and accountability structure for councils, officers, committees, staff, rostered ministers, and lay ministers.
* Greater oversight to guard against financial malfeasance.

Furthermore, the NEPA uplifts the following signs of vitality, often portrayed as the “Growing Young wheel,” as a concise reminder of the characteristics that we all strive to embody as church communities:

* Jesus’ message
* Warm relationships
* Empathy today
* Best neighbors
* Keychain leadership
* Prioritize young people everywhere

**PARTICIPANTS**

**Congregations:**

 Congregation 1, City

 Congregation 2, City

Congregation 3, City

Congregation 4, City

Congregation 5, City

Congregation 6, City

**Associated Ministries:**

 List any associated ministries with this 6261 Ministry Community.

**Pastors:**

 Rev. A, full-time

 Rev. B, full-time

**Deacon:**

Deacon A, full-time

**Licensed Lay Ministers:**

 LLM 1, from Congregation 1, City

 LLM 2, from Congregation 2, City

LLM 3, from Congregation 3, City

LLM 4, from Congregation 4, City

 LLM 5, from Congregation 5, City

LLM 6, from Congregation 6, City

**Accompaniment Partners:**

 Director for Evangelical Mission, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Bishop \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Associate to the Bishop for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mission District, Rev. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 LLM Director, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Synod Council of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mission District(s)

**AGREEMENT**

**COMPENSATION/CONTRIBUTION**

 For the 2-year period of this covenant, each congregation agrees to contribute at least their committed amount listed below and to pay it monthly by the first day of each month to the joint Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community account held by \_\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church as the fiscal agent on behalf of the 6261 Ministry Community. The joint contributions will be kept in a separate account that is an individual 6261 Ministry Community fund for supporting the Rostered Ministers and LLMs of the 6261 “Name of Bundle” Ministry Community. Rostered Ministers will be paid monthly on the 15th of each month. LLMs will be paid the last day of the month for the Sunday(s) they provided worship leadership for that month. LLMs will also be paid the last day of the month for any hours for that month that are for services for the 6261 Ministry Community. Additional hours LLMs may work for their congregation are to be paid directly to them by that congregation.

Congregation 1 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

 Congregation 2 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

 Congregation 3 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

 Congregation 4 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

Congregation 5 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

Congregation 6 commits to contributing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

The congregations of this 6261 Ministry Community agree to compensate the Pastors, Deacon, and LLMs according to the attached Budget, titled “Appendix B.”

**PRIMARY MINISTRY PROJECT**

Primary Ministry Projects are ministries that engage deeply with the community, sharing the love of God by word and deed. Often these ministries address inequities, injustices, or other needs that are not currently being met in the community.

Typically, the Primary Ministry Project is another way that people live out the Gospel and express one of the NEPA Synod values of:

* Healing the hurts
* Engaging the stranger
* Loving the land

 The Primary Ministry of Project of the “Name of Bundle” 6261 is suggested to be a … INSERT DESCRIPTION

Each congregation agrees to support the Primary Ministry Project and participate in carrying out its ministries within the community. Volunteers are encouraged to volunteer and serve in any aspect of the Primary Ministry Project, regardless of whether that particular ministry opportunity is happening at their home congregation.

**ENGAGEMENT TEAM OBLIGATIONS**

 The Engagement Team is a team dedicated to the vision, collaboration, and ministry engagement of the 6261 Ministry Community. It could be thought of as a “joint council” but its focus is on engaging the congregations of the Ministry Community as well as engaging neighbors, visitors, and strangers in the community by sharing the love God through Jesus Christ.

The Engagement Team shall consist of 2 members of each of the 6 congregations, forming a 14-member leadership team. Each congregation shall elect 2 members by two-thirds (2/3) vote to serve on the Engagement Team for a 2-year term. Each congregation shall appoint an alternate to attend in the case that 1 of the 2 members is unable to attend an Engagement Team meeting. The alternate may be appointed for a 1-year or a 2-year term.

The Engagement Team shall be authorized and responsible for overseeing the Primary Ministry Project and the 6261 Ministry Community budget and expenses, including the payment of the Pastors, Deacon, and Licensed Lay Ministers. The Engagement Team is responsible for preparing an annual budget for the 6261 Ministry Community in collaboration and with input from the 6261 Ministry Community staff and individual congregations. The Engagement Team also has authorization to perform an audit, whether performed internally or externally, of the 6261 Ministry Community shared finances.

 The Engagement Team has the ability to authorize and request from the Synod a demographic study/review of the area that encompasses the 6261 Ministry Community if this is desired and when it might be beneficial.

The Engagement Team members are expected to attend the annual 6261 Ministry Community Engagement Team one-day retreat. This retreat is intended to bring the Engagement Teams of all 6261 Ministry Communities throughout the NEPA Synod together for shared learning, mutual support, and dwelling in the Word of God.

The Engagement Team is responsible for planning God’s Work Our Hands (annually in September) and delegating across the 6 congregations. Ideally, this day would be celebrated jointly by the 6261 Ministry Community and coordinated and communicated so that members can participate – whether at one site all together or at multiple sites.

Most importantly, the Engagement Team commits to praying regularly for one another, for each of the 6 congregations, and their councils, and to listening to how each hears the Spirit calling the 6261 Ministry Community into shared ministry.

**COMMITMENT OF EACH OF THE CONGREGATIONS**

**Spiritual Commitments:**

* Prays for the 6261 Ministry Community publicly in worship as well as privately as individuals –for the shared ministry, the staff, the 6 congregations, and their members, and all who encounter the persons and ministries of the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community.
* Encourages, prays for, and supports the Licensed Lay Ministers within the congregation and the 6261 Ministry Community, accompanying them on their journey and training through the LLM formation path.
* Openness to the Spirit to guide the congregation and the 6261 Ministry Community in new ways as well as uplifting the special gifts of each congregation.

**Financial Commitments:**

* Promises to financially support the 6261 Ministry Community as outlined under the “Compensation” section of this Partnership Covenant.
* Promises to be timely with agreed upon payments.

 **Inter-Relational Commitments:**

* Supports its staff (pastors, deacon, and LLMs) with grace and flexibility.
* Commits to meeting neighbors of the community and forming relationships, based in the knowledge that all people are created in God’s image.
* Works with staff to ensure vital, authentic, creative worship that nourishes souls and empowers worshippers to live out their faith in their everyday lives in the community.
* Remains open to trying new things, new types of ministry, and incorporating technology where and as needed.
* Provides opportunities to eat together and commits to doing so - with members of the other congregations and their congregational councils - intentionally sharing in joint fellowship.
* Ensures congregation approves 2 members via a two-thirds (2/3) vote and appoints 1 alternate of the congregation to serve on the 6261 Ministry Community Engagement Team. Supports these 3 members in prayer, relationship, and participation.

**Congregational Council Commitments:**

* Attends all Coaching sessions, whether adhering to an already scheduled Council meeting or scheduled as a separate session. The Council commits to working hard through issues that bubble up, to being honest and open to direction from the Coach, and reliant upon the Holy Spirit to guide the process.
* Intentionally reaches out to Council members from the other 5 congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community to build relationships.
* Communicates regularly and transparently with the congregation concerning 6261 Ministry Community happenings and ministries.

**EXPECTATIONS OF THE LICENSED LAY MINISTERS (LLMs)**

**Spiritual Commitments:**

* Prays for the 6261 Ministry Community, its congregations, its surrounding community, and its ministries
* Provides worship leadership within his/her/their “home” congregation, including preaching, on a regular basis as established by the 6261 Ministry Community. This may or may not include providing Holy Communion.
* Leads Bible studies
* Leads and coordinates small groups
* Visits those in the hospital, those at home, and others who request a visit

**Relational Commitments:**

* Builds relationships and bridges within “home” congregation and across the 6 congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community.
* Works collaboratively and collegially with the other staff of the 6261 Ministry Community (pastors, deacon, LLMs) and attends regular staff meetings (at least monthly) as well as staff coaching sessions.

**Practical Commitments and Ongoing Responsibilities:**

* Actively participates in and completes the LLM formation path. This includes attending all 4 retreats over the 2-year program.
* In partnership with the Pastors, Deacon, and any congregational staff, leads and engages the 6261 Ministry Community to define its ministry vision and embeddedness within the surrounding community for mutual ministry.
* Attends “home” Congregational Council meetings as a part of the LLM candidate mentorship process and as liaison role once licensed as a LLM.
* Attends Engagement Team meetings once fully licensed as a LLM and as mutually determined in consultation with the pastors, deacon, and Engagement Team.

**EXPECTATIONS OF THE DEACON**

**Spiritual Commitments:**

* Prays for the 6261 Ministry Community, its congregations, its surrounding community, and its ministries
* Leads worship, preaches, and sets the table for Holy Communion
* Uses their distinct and diverse ministry gifts and experiences, as well as their prophetic voice, for encouraging and integrating the primary ministry project of the 6261 Ministry Community
* Other ministries as determined by the 6261 Ministry Community such as leading Bible studies, small groups, visitation, teaching Confirmation, administration, etc.

**Relational Commitments:**

* Diligently works to build relationships across all 6 congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community, being intentional not to prioritize or favor any one particular congregation.
* Equips the 6261 Ministry Community for service embedded within the community.
* Works collegially with other members of the 6261 Ministry Community’s staff (pastors, deacon, LLMs) and leads decision-making with a consensus model among staff.
* With their two pastor colleagues, mentors and supervises the 6 Licensed Lay Ministers on their vocational journeys. Provides time for training, discernment, and feedback to LLMs. Attends LLM retreats when requested.

**Practical Commitments and Ongoing Responsibilities:**

* Coordinates ministry teams, raises up leaders, and builds disciples for faith in action.
* In partnership with the other staff, leads and engages the 6261 Ministry Community to define its ministry vision and embeddedness within the surrounding community for shared ministry.
* With the Pastors, coordinates weekly staff meetings for the Rostered Ministers, along with regular staff meetings which include both LLMs and Rostered Ministers.
* Attends staff meetings and staff coaching sessions for Rostered Ministers and LLMs.
* As requested, attends meetings with auxiliary staff and staff employed solely by congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community for coordinated ministry efforts and enhanced communication.
* Fully and actively participates in Synod 6261 educational opportunities, incorporating learnings and utilizing tools to enable cultural transformation of the 6261 Ministry Community.
* Attends Engagement Team meetings.
* Attends Congregational Council meetings as requested.

**EXPECTATIONS OF THE PASTORS**

**Initial Primary Pastor:**

The Initial Primary Pastor is the pastor who will be the primary relator to that congregation, especially for pastoral care concerns, visitation, and other congregational or pastoral emergencies.

Congregation 1, City - Pr.

Congregation 2, City - Pr.

Congregation 3, City - Pr.

Congregation 4, City - Pr.

Congregation 5, City - Pr.

Congregation 6, City - Pr.

*6261 Ministry Communities can also decide to have one pastor or deacon serve as the primary point of contact for all visitations, pastoral emergencies for all congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community.*

**Spiritual Commitments:**

* Prays for the 6261 Ministry Community, its congregations, its surrounding community, and its ministries
* Leads worship, preaches, and administers Holy Communion
* Performs baptisms, weddings, and funerals
* Visits those in the hospital, those at home, and others who request pastoral care

**Relational Commitments:**

* Diligently works to build relationships across all 6 congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community, being intentional not to prioritize or favor any one particular congregation.
* Works collegially with other members of the 6261 Ministry Community’s staff (pastors, deacon, LLMs) and leads decision-making with a consensus model among staff.
* With their deacon colleague, mentors and supervises the 6 Licensed Lay Ministers on their vocational journeys. Provides time for training, discernment, and feedback to LLMs. Attends LLM retreats when requested.

**Practical Commitments and Ongoing Responsibilities:**

* Coordinates ministry teams and staff to plan worship services – including music, prayers, lectionary type(s), service settings, liturgical elements, creative opportunities, etc.
* In partnership with the other staff, leads and engages the 6261 Ministry Community to define its ministry vision and embeddedness within the surrounding community for shared ministry.
* With the Deacon, coordinates weekly staff meetings for the Rostered Ministers, along with regular staff meetings which include both LLMs and Rostered Ministers.
* Attends staff meetings and staff coaching sessions for Rostered Ministers and LLMs.
* Coordinates and attends meetings with auxiliary staff and staff employed solely by congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community for coordinated ministry efforts and enhanced communication.
* Fully and actively participates in Synod 6261 educational opportunities, incorporating learnings and utilizing tools to enable cultural transformation of the 6261 Ministry Community.
* Attends Engagement Team meetings.
* Attends Congregational Council meetings. The specific congregations will be determined mutually between the pastors and the congregations.

**CALL PROCESS**

The process for calling a Rostered Minister (Deacon or Pastor) to the 6261 Ministry Community mirrors the traditional process of a single congregation or yoked congregations calling a Rostered Minister. The Associate to the Bishop for \_\_\_\_\_\_ Mission District will assist you throughout the call process.

The Call Process for 6261 Ministry Communities is outlined and described in detail in “Appendix C” of this Covenant. The Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community commits to using this process should it discern the need or desire to call a Rostered Minister to the 6261 Ministry Community.

It is also recognized that any expenses incurred from onsite interviews of a Rostered Minister Candidate should be paid out of the 6261 Ministry Community joint budget and joint account.

**CALLING BODY**

Due to ELCA church policy, neither parishes nor multiple congregations may call a Rostered Minister. On paper, the Rostered Minister may serve a call at only a single entity. For this reason, a single congregation will serve as the call-holder for the ELCA paperwork on behalf of the entire Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community. The call-holders are listed below.

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church will hold the call for Pastor A on behalf of the Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church will hold the call for Pastor B on behalf of the Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who will hold the call for Deacon A on behalf of the Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community.

The call-holders commit to maintaining any necessary paperwork for good order and continuation of the call, and that if any issues should arise, to notify the Engagement Team. The call-holders also recognize that the Rostered Minister under call to their congregation is intended to serve the whole Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community and not solely their congregation.

**TERMINATION OF CALL**

Rostered Ministers are allowed to resign their call voluntarily at any time, barring any specific durations stipulated in their employment contract or call documents. Typically, the call-holder retains the right to terminate a Rostered Minister with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the full congregation.

However, due to the nature of the shared call amongst the 6261 Ministry Community and the joint call process to call a Rostered Minister to the 6261 Ministry Community, all call-holding congregations of the Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community agree not to initiate termination protocols as contained in the Model ELCA Constitution without consultation with the Engagement Team and the other Congregational Councils of the Name of Bundle 6261 Ministry Community.

**TIMELINE**

* By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – Paperwork and Votes completed
* 6261 Ministry Community begins
* First Engagement Team Meeting
* Engagement Teams Retreat
* Reflection and Feedback on 6261
* September 2025 – God’s Work Our Hands Sunday
* Engagement Teams Retreat
* Reflection and Feedback on 6261 with discernment about continuation
* September 2026 – God’s Work Our Hands Sunday
* Congregational votes to continue or discontinue the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community
* If continuing the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community, the new Covenant is signed

**TARGETED GOALS**

* Continue to discern, identify, and participate in the ministry of the Primary Ministry Project and the roles each congregation will have in supporting it.
* Continue to build relationships with one another and build up the body of Christ.
* Support LLMs on their formation path through prayer, encouragement, and finances.
* Lift up additional LLMs so that, ideally, each congregation of the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community will have at least one LLM serving them as their “home “congregation.
* Mutually identify and call a Deacon, including creating a job description for the duties as they specifically relate to the context of the \_\_\_\_\_ area “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community and its Primary Ministry Project.
* Continue to discern and mutually agree upon the pastoral needs of the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community, evaluating the skills and hours needed to balance Pastor A and Pastor B.

**COVENANTAL AGREEMENT**

Each congregation listed within this covenant will hold its own official congregational meeting to propose this covenant and its parameters herein with the understanding that a three-fourths (3/4) vote is needed to express the congregation’s desire and commitment to participate in the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community. It is understood that congregations retain their individual identity and autonomy, including their own responsibility for maintaining their 501c3 status, good-standing with the ELCA and NEPA Synod, and any properties or other assets.

By adopting this covenant, congregations accept the 2-year duration commitment. If for some rare and unforeseen circumstance, a congregation in good faith has concerns that it can no longer abide by this covenant or remain in the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community, then that congregation agrees to first bring its concern to the Engagement Team for mutual discussion and discernment. It is hoped that the Congregational Council and Engagement Team will be able to find mutually agreeable solutions so that it remains feasible and beneficial for the congregation to remain in the 6261 Ministry Community. After extensive conversation, evaluation, and discernment, the Engagement Team, however, may by majority vote, agree to grant the congregation the opportunity to hold a congregational meeting to vote on its continuance in the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community. The congregation will need to provide proper notice of the meeting and will require a four-fifths (4/5) vote to withdraw from the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community.

**SIGNATURE COMMITMENT**

Each congregational council president will sign the covenant on behalf of their congregation as a commitment to abide by this covenant and to the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community. By signing, each congregational council president verifies that the congregation has held an official congregational meeting and has approved this covenant with a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregational membership.

Each pastor listed to serve the “Name of Bundle” 6261 Ministry Community will sign the covenant as a commitment to abide by the expectations of pastor listed within this covenant.

The NEPA Synod Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) will sign the covenant as Synod witness to and commitment of their partnership in supporting this 6261 Ministry Community.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Council President of Congregation 1, City Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Council President of Congregation 2, City Date

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Council President of Congregation 3, City Date

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Council President of Congregation 4, City Date

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Council President of Congregation 5, City Date

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Council President of Congregation 6, City Date

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Pastor A Date

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Pastor B Date

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Deacon A Date

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NAME, NEPA Synod DEM Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bishop NAME Date

**APPENDIX A : ACRONYM KEY**

**Coach:** An ELCA-trained person in facilitation, discernment, and guiding congregations along their ministry journey. A Coach does not provide answers but rather works with teams and individuals to help them discover the solutions that will best work. Coaches come to the table understanding their “clients” to be creative, resourceful, and whole.

**CWO: Churchwide Organization** - the national body of the ELCA, headquartered in Chicago, IL.

**DEM: Director for Evangelical Mission** – a Synod and Churchwide staff member responsible for vitality, strategic ministries, SAOMs, SAWCs, and other Synod-specific ministry initiatives.

**EBMD: East Berks Mission District** – the geographic area of the Synod that includes the Eastern area of Berks County, PA.

**ELCA: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** – a merger in 1988 of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).

**GRAIL: Greater Reading Area Involved Lutherans** – a group of Lutheran congregations in and near Reading, PA who came together starting in 1972 to collaborate and share in ministry.

**Growing Young** – “Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church” by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin is a book that centers around the “Growing Young” wheel of 6 key characteristics of congregations who are vital and multigenerational.

**LGBTQ: Lesbian-Gay-Bi-Trans-Queer** – a shorthand way to reference people who identify Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer, along with additional identities including Asexual, Intersex, and Two-Spirit.

**LLM:** **Licensed Lay Minister** – lay people of the NEPA Synod who have completed the coursework and fulfilled the requirements to become licensed by the NEPA Synod Bishop to serve a specific congregation or 6261 Ministry Community within the NEPA Synod.

**LWF: Lutheran World Federation** – a global communion of national and regional Lutheran denominations (including the ELCA) for collaboration, shared ministry, and proclamation of the Gospel around the world. The LWF is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

**MSP: Ministry Site Profile** – the paperwork congregations and ministry sites complete when in the call process and looking for a new rostered minister.

**MSS: Mission Site Story** – the MSP process specifically designed by the NEPA Synod for 6261 Ministry Communities who are looking to call a deacon or pastor.

**NEPA:** **Northeastern Pennsylvania** (Synod) – the ELCA consists of 65 Synods across the United States and Puerto Rico. The NEPA Synod stretches from Reading to New Jersey in the east and all the way to the New York border in the north.

**Portico Benefit Services** – the benefits broker of the ECLA for health insurance, pension, disability benefits (short-term and long-term), and basic group life insurance, required for Rostered Ministers serving in congregations of the ELCA, but also open to lay employees of ELCA congregations and ELCA-associated ministries.

**RIC: Reconciling in Christ** – since 1983, RIC has been a public way for communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expression within the Lutheran church. RIC is a process which Synods, congregations, seminaries, colleges/universities, outdoor ministries, and other Lutheran organizations can complete and which then serves as witness that they are safe places for LGBTQIA+ people to worship and participate.

**Roster:** The list of ordained people who have completed the ELCA candidacy requirements and are authorized for ministry. The ELCA has 2 rosters: Word and Sacrament (Pastors) + Word and Service (Deacons).

**RLP: Reading Lutheran Parish** – was a cluster within the WBMD, made up of 13 city-based Lutheran congregations and clergy in Reading who worked closely together from 1992-2002.

**RMP: Rostered Minister Profile** – the paperwork which a pastor or deacon will complete to become available for a new call. Synods receive this paperwork and share it with congregations and ministry sites.

**SAOM:** **Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry** – an outreach ministry for service and evangelism that is typically shared across multiple congregations or is its own independent 501c3 organization for the purpose of providing ministry to the community.

**SAWC: Synod Authorized Worshipping Community** – a worshipping community in the process of developing into an organized ELCA congregation.

**WBMD: West Berks Mission District** – the geographic area of the Synod that includes the Western area of Berks County, PA.

**APPENDIX C : CALL PROCESS**

**STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW:**

1. Meet with your Associate to the Bishop and form a Joint Call Committee.
2. Complete the Mission Site Story (MSS) as a 6261 Ministry Community.
	1. Each congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community completes “Appendix A” individually. The Joint Call Committee compiles them.
	2. See note below for additional ELCA posting option.
3. Meet with your Associate to the Bishop along with the Bishop to review your competed MSS.
4. Receive names and paperwork of potential Rostered Minister candidates.
5. Conduct review of paperwork and associated materials and conduct interviews with potential Rostered Minister candidates until find preferred candidate.
6. Consult with the Engagement Team and each individual Congregational Council regarding the preferred candidate. If in agreement, invite the preferred candidate for an initial onsite interview.
7. Preferred candidate attends initial onsite interview.
8. Following the initial onsite interview, each Congregation Council votes to recommend the preferred candidate to their congregation for full congregational approval.
	1. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required from each Congregational Council for the preferred candidate to receive recommendation.
	2. The preferred candidate is given up to 2 weeks to discern if they wish to let their name go forward with the process.
9. If the above requirements are met, the Joint Call Committee schedules a second onsite interview with the preferred candidate **and** each congregation is given proper notice of the full congregational meeting during which the call vote will be held. If the above requirements are **not** met, the Joint Call Committee returns to Step 3 or Step 4 and resumes the Call Process therewith.
10. Preferred candidate attends second onsite interview which includes a “Meet & Greet” for all congregational members of the 6261 Ministry Community as well as a Joint Worship Service in which the preferred candidate takes an appropriate worship leadership role.
11. Each congregation holds a full congregational meeting and votes to call the preferred candidate. Ideally, these congregational meetings are held back-to-back.
	1. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required by each congregation to approve the candidate for call to the 6261 Ministry Community.
12. The preferred candidate has 30 days to accept the call in writing.
13. If the preferred candidate accepts the call, the NEPA Synod works with the 6261 Ministry Community to finalize paperwork and formally complete the Call Process! If the preferred candidate does **not** accept the call, the Joint Call Committee returns to Step 3 or Step 4 and resumes the Call Process therewith.

**CALL PROCESS IN DETAIL:**

CALL COMMITTEE:

First a Call Committee will be formed. The Call Committee will consist of 1 member from each of the 6 Name of Bundle congregations, along with a member of the Steering Committee of Hope’s Table. Members of the Engagement Team are not eligible to serve on the Call Committee.

MISSION SITE STORY (MSS):

In lieu of completing a Ministry Site Profile (MSP), the 6261 Ministry Community Call Committee will complete a Mission Site Story (MSS) which gathers information on the 6261 Ministry Community as a whole along with an appendix that reflects each congregation’s unique demographics, worship styles, building(s), and budget. Once completed, the Call Committee submits the MSS to the Synod office.

INTERVIEW PROCESS:

Then the Call Committee is given the paperwork of interested and qualified Rostered Ministers. The Call Committee reviews the paperwork, holds interviews with candidates, and reviews worship leadership materials/recordings until it finds their preferred candidate, at which point the Call Committee makes a recommendation to the Engagement Team.

Upon review and consultation with each Congregational Council, the Engagement Team may invite the preferred candidate for an initial onsite interview. The initial onsite interview would include time with the Call Committee, Engagement Team, each Congregational Council (and SAWC Steering Committee), 6261 Ministry Community staff, and tours of each church facility.

Following the initial onsite interview, each Congregational Council will meet to discuss and then hold a vote on whether to recommend the preferred candidate to their congregation for full congregational approval. It is appropriate to include Engagement Team members from the congregation during this discussion. The Congregational Council can determine if the Engagement Team members have voice only or also vote for the preferred candidate recommendation. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required from each Congregational Council for the candidate to receive recommendation. If the candidate receives recommendation, the candidate is then provided time (no more than two weeks) to discern whether they wish to move forward with the process by allowing their name to go forward to the full congregations for a vote.

If the preferred candidate receives recommendation from each Congregational Council and allows their name to go forward in the process, the Call Committee schedules a second onsite interview. There may be additional interviews with the Call Committee, Engagement Team, or others as determined by the Call Committee in consultation with the Engagement Team. The second onsite interview should include a “meet and greet” time open to all members of congregations of the 6261 Ministry Community for an informal time to interact with the preferred candidate. The Call Committee should also coordinate a joint worship service for the preferred candidate to provide an experience of worship leadership (preaching, presiding, and/or assisting as appropriate for the call and their roster). The joint worship service should be announced and communicated to all of the 6261 Ministry Community congregations well in advance so that as many members as possible may attend. The joint worship service may be held at one of the 6261 Ministry Community congregations or at a neutral site.

VOTING TO CALL:

As soon as possible following the second onsite interview – ideally, immediately following the joint worship service – each congregation will need to hold a full congregational vote to call the preferred candidate. The Council President of each congregation will need to ensure a quorum for their congregation before calling the congregational meeting to order. The motion to call the preferred candidate for the Rostered Minister position to the pre-identified calling body (congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community or NEPA Synod) then comes before the congregational assembly from the Congregational Council. Ushers will collect the ballots and the pre-determined counters will count the ballots in a private space to determine the outcome of the vote.

6261 Ministry Communities are encouraged to coordinate the scheduling of back-to-back congregational meetings with the Associate to the Bishop for East & West Berks Mission District and/or Executive Associate for Leadership so that the votes can take place efficiently, orderly, and as simultaneously as possible. Per Constitutional requirements, a Synod representative will need to be present for each congregational vote.

If the congregational votes are held back-to-back at the same location, color-coded ballots will be used to identify the votes of each congregation. Each congregational meeting would still need to be called to order but they could take place sequentially with one congregational meeting (and vote) occurring immediately following the other. Once all the congregations have voted and the ballots have been collected, the counters separate the ballots by color (i.e. by congregation) and count the votes. It is highly recommended that there be three (3) counters and that they each be a member of a different congregation of the 6261 Ministry Community. The counters will need to present the results of the vote. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required by each congregation to approve the candidate for call to the 6261 Ministry Community.

CANDIDATE ACCEPTANCE:

If the candidate is approved for call, the candidate is immediately notified and then given up to thirty (30) days to accept the call in writing. This requirement for the candidate to accept the call in writing remains even if the candidate verbally accepts the call on the day of the vote.