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Companions with

The Mbulu Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & Holy Land

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Michigan Synod (“Synod”) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“ELCA”) is committed to preventing sexual misconduct within the church and to responding with justice and compassion when such misconduct occurs. This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** describes how the Synod intends to fulfill these commitments. This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** shall also apply to licensed ministers and any others authorized by the bishop to provide pastoral care. The Synod recognizes that responding to allegations of sexual misconduct requires determination, sensitivity, flexibility, respect and care for all persons affected, including the survivor, the rostered person, their families and friends, the congregation, the synod, and the whole church. This policy is intended to provide a framework for guidance in dealing with these cases while preserving the synod’s discretion to treat each person and each case in the manner necessitated by differing facts, circumstances, and the needs of those affected. This policy cannot be imposed as rigid law, binding the synod and others to its dictates; it must be interpreted and applied compassionately in accordance with the theological and biblical principles of the Gospel. It must always be remembered, however, that any suspected sexual contact with a minor must be reported to the appropriate governmental agency as required by state laws concerning reporting of child abuse.

I. DEFINITION of TERMS

“Bishop”: A bishop is an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA, given the responsibility to provide pastoral care and leadership in a synod. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod, elected to a term of six years and may be reelected.

“Bishop’s Assistant”: A bishop’s assistant is a person who assists the synodical bishop in carrying out the mission and ministry of a synod. A bishop’s assistant or associate may be an ordained minister, a rostered lay minister, or a layperson.

“Synod”: There are 65 synods in the ELCA. Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, bears primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in its territory.

“Rostered Minister”: When this policy refers to rostered ministers, it includes pastors and deacons. This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** assumes that the rostered minister who is accused of sexual misconduct is under call to a congregation, but it may also be adapted to calls in other circumstances. A rostered person or employee may also be a member of the congregation.

“Sexual Misconduct”: Generally, this term refers to activity in which the rostered person engages in any sexual or romantic behavior with a parishioner, client, employee, co-worker, volunteer, or, if married, any person other than one’s own spouse. Federal and state laws make distinctions among various types of sexual misconduct. Similarly, the governing documents of the ELCA define what types of sexual misconduct can result in a rostered person being disciplined. This policy is intended to address those types of sexual misconduct that may lead to discipline of a Rostered Minister under [Chapter 20 of Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#). These distinctions should not concern a person who is troubled about the sexual conduct of a rostered person. Any inappropriate sexual behavior should be reported to the Synod.

“Sexual Harassment” is an intentional or unintentional verbal or physical sexual advance that is unwelcome and personally offensive to its recipients. It is sexual conduct which creates an offensive, hostile, or intimidating environment in the church, workplace, school, or public service. It may include verbal abuse, sexist jokes, sexual innuendo, gender bias, unwelcome physical contact, demanding sexual favors with implied or overt threats or physical assault.

“Sexual Exploitation” is inappropriate sexual conversation, dating or suggestions of sexual involvement by the rostered person, and/or sexual or romantic contact between a rostered person and anyone with whom the rostered person has a professional/pastoral relationship.

“Sexual Abuse” is sexual conduct, including criminal conduct, which includes any sexual contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) between a rostered person and anyone with whom the rostered person has a professional/pastoral relationship. While this policy addresses sexual abuse, it should be noted that any kind of abuse is unacceptable behavior. Any sexual abuse of a minor must be reported, by the person learning about the accusation, to State authorities for investigation.

“Sexual Assault” varies in its definitions between states. The Federal Criminal Code incorporates gender neutrality and a broad definition of sexual abuse acts, it distinguishes between types of sexual abuse based on the degree of force or threat used and does not use the term “rape.”

“Sexual Assault” includes causing another person to engage in a sexual act or attempts to do so by using force or coercion, or by threatening that person in fear of being subjected to death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping, inclusive of instances in which the assailant is married to the survivor. “Aggravated Sexual Assault by Other Means” refers to a person knowingly rendering another unconscious or who administers to another without their knowledge or permission a drug or intoxicant and thereby engages in a sexual act because of their impaired ability to appraise or control conduct. “Aggravated Sexual Assault with a Child” involves such abuse or attempted abuse with a person under 12 years old.

Sexual assault carries severe penalties in Michigan and comes under the guidelines for legal discipline of rostered persons in the ELCA. Any sexual assault of a minor must be reported, by the person learning about the accusation, to the State authorities for investigation.

“Complainant”: As used in this **STATEMENT OF POLICY**, “complainant” means a person who reports sexual misconduct to the Synod. This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** will assume that the complainant is also the survivor of the alleged sexual misconduct.

II. ROLES

A. The Role of Congregations

The Synod and its member congregations have different responsibilities and different roles to play in preventing and responding to reports of sexual misconduct by rostered persons. Each ELCA congregation is self-governing, exercising control over its internal practices and policies and the use of its property. The congregation elects its leadership and employs and supervises its own staff. Each congregation also calls its own pastor and/or other rostered and lay ministers, determines the duties and responsibilities, and shares in the day-to-day ministry of rostered and lay congregational leadership. The Synod has neither the authority nor the ability to make those decisions for a congregation.

In accordance with the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, it is the congregation that, in consultation with the Synod, finally determines whether to terminate the rostered person's call. Obviously, then, the Church cannot be a safe place unless every one of its member congregations shares its commitment to preventing sexual misconduct by rostered ministers.

This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** is the Synod's; it says little about the important role played by congregations in preventing and responding to reports of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. This should not obscure the fact that congregations also have a vital role to play. The Synod strongly urges its member congregations to develop their own sexual misconduct policies. The publication, *Safe Connections: What Parishioners Can Do To Understand and Prevent Clergy Sexual Abuse* is available online <https://elca.org/safeplace>. The Synod recommends it and other resources ([Sexual Misconduct Prevention - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://elca.org/safeplace)) to congregations addressing the issue.

It should be noted that the Synod may not be able to assume primary responsibility for addressing all allegations of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. For example, if a pastor who is under call to a congregation is accused of harassing another of the congregation's employees, civil law may take precedence over Synod intervention. Nevertheless, the Synod should be consulted in all cases involving rostered ministers.

B. The Role of the Synod

The Synod's role is essentially two-fold. First, the Bishop is responsible for providing pastoral care and leadership to the Synod's congregations and rostered ministers. Reports of sexual misconduct invariably create an acute need for such care and leadership. Second, rostered ministers who commit sexual misconduct may be disciplined, leading to possible removal from the roster of the ELCA. The bishop is held primarily responsible for overseeing the preliminary or consultation stage of the disciplinary process and for initiating the formal stage of the disciplinary process. When the bishop provides for pastoral care and leadership in the wake of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers, he or she is truly engaged in the Synod's ministry.

As stated in the introduction, every report of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers involves unique people and unique circumstances. This Statement of Policy merely describes the general approach that the Synod will follow in responding to reports of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. The Synod reserves the right to depart from the Statement of Policy at any time and for any reason.

In every sexual misconduct case, the bishop and their staff will attempt to provide for the pastoral care of the survivor of the misconduct, the survivor's family, the rostered minister accused of misconduct, the rostered minister's family, members of the rostered minister's present and former congregation(s), the rostered minister's colleagues and others. However, the bishop and the bishop's staff do not themselves function as a pastor, counselor, advocate, attorney, or other caregiver to any of these individuals. If a conflict arises between what is in the Synod's interest and what is in the interest of someone else, the bishop and the bishop's staff are obligated to act on the Synod's behalf. In unusual circumstances, the fact that the bishop and bishop's staff is responsible to the Synod may require that they act contrary to the wishes of the complainant.

Nothing in this Statement of Policy is intended to diminish the Synod's freedoms in any respect or to create any rights or responsibilities under civil law.

III. SYNOD POLICY

An ELCA Strategy for Responding to Sexual Abuse in the Church (Nov. 1992) recommended that nine elements be included in any synodical policy regarding rostered minister sexual misconduct. This Synod has decided to incorporate those nine elements as follows:

A. Adequate Preparation

The Synod is committed to take action to prevent sexual conduct by rostered ministers. The Synod will make its position on this issue clear in educational opportunities that it provides, in the manner in which it responds to reports of rostered minister misconduct, in discussions that it has with seminarians and others who seek to join its rosters, and in its public and private statements on the subject. This policy and an At-A-Glance policy will be available on the Synod Website. Educational forums and workshops will be advertised through the Synod's social media outlets and on the website.

First, the Synod will not tolerate sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. This means the Synod will not ignore reports, will act upon substantiated allegations, and will properly disclose findings of rostered minister sexual misconduct. This is not to say that the Synod will treat every case exactly the same. Sexual misconduct varies greatly by type, by degree, and by its effect on those involved. The Synod will attempt to respond appropriately to each case while not tolerating any misbehavior discovered to exist.

Second, the Synod intends to provide or promote ongoing educational opportunities regarding sexual misconduct for rostered ministers, congregations and others. Education will focus on such subjects as prevention of rostered minister misconduct and the impact of such misconduct on its survivors. The Synod strongly urges its rostered ministers and its congregations to take advantage of these opportunities, as well as appropriate educational opportunities offered by others.

In addition, the bishop and the bishop's staff will continue to take advantage of educational opportunities that are available to them. The Synod recognizes that society generally and churches particularly have much to learn about rostered minister sexual misconduct. As the Synod's understanding of this problem changes, this **STATEMENT OF POLICY** and educational efforts may change as well.

This Synod's preventative efforts are intended to complement similar efforts that have been or will be made by the Synod's member congregations, by the churchwide organization, by ELCA seminaries, and by other entities affiliated with the ELCA.

B. Initial Contact

Even the best preventative measures cannot completely eliminate sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. The Synod must always be prepared to respond to reports of misconduct. The more open the Synod is to receiving such reports, the more often rostered minister sexual misconduct will be reported and, hopefully, prevented.

Anyone who knows or suspects that a rostered minister may have been involved in sexual misconduct should report that knowledge or suspicion to the bishop or an assistant to the bishop. As used in this **STATEMENT OF POLICY**, the term "complainant" means a person who reports sexual misconduct to the Synod. This **STATEMENT OF POLICY** assumes that the complainant is also the survivor of the alleged sexual misconduct, but that may not always be the case.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the bishop and bishop's assistants are attached to this Statement of Policy. If a complainant is uncomfortable about contacting the bishop or an assistant to the bishop, the complainant should contact one of the people on the discipline committee, listed at the end of this document. If a complaint is to be made about the bishop, the complainant should contact the ELCA Secretary or the ELCA Consultant for Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, listed at the end of this document.

A contact may be made with the bishop or other authorized person by mail, email, by telephone or in person. The complainant need not identify herself or himself when she or he first contacts the Synod. The complainant may ask questions anonymously about how the Synod would respond to a particular complaint of misconduct. However, the Synod can do little about a report of sexual misconduct until the complainant identifies the rostered minister involved in the misconduct.

The bishop or other person contacted by the complainant will (1) assure the complainant that the Synod does not tolerate sexual misconduct and takes seriously all reports of such misconduct; (2) explain the Synod's process for responding to reports of sexual misconduct and offer to provide a copy of this **STATEMENT OF POLICY**; (3) answer the complainant's questions about the policies and procedures of the Synod; (4) express care and concern for the complainant; (5) when the complainant is anonymous, encourage the complainant to identify themselves and the rostered person involved in the misconduct.

C. First Response

Promptly after a report of sexual misconduct by a rostered person has been received from an identified complainant, the bishop or the bishop's designee will interview the complainant in person or, if that is not possible, by telephone. In this and all meetings with Synod personnel, the complainant may be accompanied by a friend, family member, support person, or advocate of his/her/their choice. The complainant may contact an advocate and may be accompanied by that advocate through the reporting, investigative, and, if necessary, disciplinary processes. At the complainant's request, the Synod will contact an advocate for them. The bishop or designee will ask the complainant to provide as much information about the

sexual misconduct as the complainant is comfortable sharing. The complainant may be asked to reduce the information to writing or to sign a written statement prepared by the Synod. The bishop or designee will also ask the complainant what they seek in coming forward. The complainant will be given a copy of this Statement of Policy if they have not already received it.

The bishop or designee will discuss with the complainant how they feel about the possibility that her/his/their identity may become known to the accused or others. Insofar as possible, the Synod will respect the wishes of the complainant regarding the confidentiality. However, at some point, the Synod may be required by civil law or by the governing documents of the ELCA to disclose the identity of the complainant. Also, in unusual circumstances, the fact that the bishop or designee is responsible to the Synod may require actions contrary to the wishes of the complainant.

If the bishop or designee learns that a child or vulnerable adult may have been neglected or physically or sexually abused, the bishop or designee may be legally required to report that information to law enforcement authorities. The bishop or designee may also urge and assist the complainant to file a report with the authorities. If possible, the complainant will be notified before such a report is made by the Synod.

When the complainant is a survivor, the bishop or designee will discuss with the complainant her or his needs for pastoral care or professional counseling. If the complainant requests, the bishop or designee will help to put the complainant in touch with persons who can provide such care or counseling. Under no circumstances will any employee of the Synod function as the complainant's advocate, pastor, or counselor. Such complainants are strongly encouraged to seek the care of an able counselor.

The bishop or designee will appoint a contact person within the Synod. That contact person (who may be the bishop or designee) will keep in regular contact with the complainant, inform the complainant of significant developments, and be available to respond to the complainant's concerns about the process.

D. Initial Investigation of the Complaint

After interviewing the complainant, the bishop or bishop's designee will carefully review the information provided by the complainant. If the report appears credible and involves sexual misconduct for which the perpetrator might be disciplined, the bishop or designee may conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether information either supporting or contradicting the report exists. This preliminary investigation may include (1) further discussions with the complainant; (2) discussion with the rostered minister; (3) a review of the records of the Synod, another ELCA synod, the ELCA, or an entity affiliated with the ELCA; (4) interviews of former bishops of the rostered minister, those who served as assistants to former bishops of the rostered minister, rostered ministers who succeeded the accused rostered minister at congregations they served, rostered ministers who served on the same staff with the accused rostered minister at congregations where they served, rostered ministers who presently serve on the same staff with the accused rostered minister, respected members of congregations where the accused rostered minister served, respected members of the congregation where the rostered minister now serves; or (5) persons identified by the complainant, or friends, family members, pastors or counselors of the complainant.

This preliminary investigation will be conducted as quickly and as discreetly as is possible under the circumstances. All of those contacted will be asked to keep the contact in strictest confidence. If the Synod or a discipline hearing committee later determines that the rostered minister did not commit sexual misconduct, that conclusion will be communicated to those who were contacted by the Synod in the course of its preliminary investigation.

If a criminal investigation, or other official investigation by law enforcement authorities, is underway, the Synod may need to postpone its own investigation pending the outcome of the government's inquiry or prosecution. However, a final determination in a related civil or criminal legal proceeding does not necessarily dictate the necessity for, or the outcome of, the church's disciplinary process.

E. Conversation with the Rostered Minister

The bishop will usually meet with the accused rostered minister after the preliminary investigation is concluded. The bishop should be accompanied by the bishop's designee or another person. In some cases – such as when the rostered minister is aware of the complainant's report or when the rostered minister may pose an immediate danger to members of their congregation – the bishop or bishop's designee may meet with the rostered minister immediately after, or perhaps even before, meeting with the complainant. If the bishop meets alone with the rostered minister, the bishop will clarify that the meeting is not confidential, and that the bishop may share anything disclosed to them.

At their meeting, the bishop will provide the rostered minister with information regarding the complaint and ask the rostered minister to respond. The bishop may ask the rostered minister to reduce their response to writing. The bishop will also (1) assure the rostered minister that, while the Synod does not tolerate sexual misconduct, the Synod will give any rostered minister who denies an allegation of sexual misconduct a full and fair opportunity to contest it; (2) explain the Synod's process for responding to reports of sexual misconduct and provide a copy of this Statement of Policy; (3) answer the rostered minister's questions about the policies and procedures of the Synod; (4) express care and concern for the rostered minister, the rostered minister's family, and the affected congregation; (5) strongly discourage the rostered minister from having any contact with the complainant, either directly or indirectly; and (6) invite the rostered minister to contact an advocate and to be accompanied by that advocate through the investigative, and, if necessary, disciplinary processes. If the rostered minister requests it, the Synod will assist the rostered minister in finding an advocate. The rostered minister may decline to use an advocate.

The bishop may ask the rostered minister to resign their call or to resign from the roster of the ELCA. The bishop cannot force the rostered minister to submit a resignation. In most cases, only a discipline hearing committee can remove the rostered minister from the roster involuntarily.

The bishop may also ask the rostered minister to voluntarily agree to certain restrictions upon his/her/their ministry until the investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings are concluded. If the rostered minister refuses, the bishop may ask the congregation council to impose the restrictions upon the rostered minister. The bishop may also ask the rostered minister to take a leave of absence – either with or without pay – until the investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings are concluded. Again, if the rostered minister refuses, the bishop may ask the congregation to place the pastor on an involuntary leave of absence. In extreme circumstances, the bishop may consider temporarily suspending the rostered minister without prejudice.

The bishop or designee will discuss with the rostered minister their needs for pastoral care or for professional counseling, as well as the care of the rostered minister's family. If the rostered minister requests it, the bishop or designee will help to put the rostered minister in touch with persons who can provide such care or counseling. Under no circumstances will any employee of the Synod function as advocate, pastor, or counselor to the rostered minister or the rostered minister's family.

The bishop or designee will appoint a contact person within the Synod. That contact person (who may be the bishop or designee) will keep in regular contact with the rostered minister and will inform the rostered minister of significant developments. That contact person will also be available to respond to the rostered minister's questions and concerns about the process.

F. Assess the Information

After meeting with the rostered minister, the bishop will carefully review the information provided by the complainant, discovered during the preliminary investigation, and provided by the rostered minister. The bishop may also consult with staff or other advisors. The bishop will then decide upon a course of action, keeping in mind that changed circumstances may require changes in direction as the matter progresses. Among options available to the bishop are the following: taking no further action at this time; pursuing further investigation; requesting the rostered minister to undergo a psycho-diagnostic evaluation; seeking a resolution by consulting directly with the parties; requesting the congregation to take some action; reporting to legal authorities; convening a consultation or advisory panel; initiating the formal disciplinary process. These latter two options are discussed further below. Depending upon the circumstances, additional options may be considered as well, including requesting the rostered minister to resign from the call, from the roster, or both.

G. Consultation or Advisory Panel

Reports of sexual misconduct always present a bishop with difficult decisions. To assist him/her/them in making these decisions, a bishop may, at their sole discretion, appoint a consultation or advisory panel. The function of a consultation or advisory panel is described at length in Bylaws 20.21.04 to 20.21.06 of the [ELCA Constitution and Bylaws](#). Further detail appears in Section "D" of [Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings Against an Ordained Minister, a Rostered Layperson, or a Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#).

Essentially, a consultation or advisory panel is a small group of rostered ministers and laypersons asked to recommend a course of action to the bishop. Before making that recommendation, the panel may do its own investigation including interviewing the complainant and/or survivor, the rostered minister, the bishop, the bishop's designee, and others. If possible, the panel will seek to resolve the conflict through recommendations that are pastoral and therapeutic and that will eliminate the need for disciplinary proceedings if they are accepted by all concerned. If such a resolution does not appear possible, the panel will advise the bishop whether it believes that the disciplinary process should be initiated.

Whether to employ the advisory or consultation process is always discretionary with the bishop. Use of such panels may be beneficial in a variety of circumstances. For example, a

bishop may be confronted with “one person’s word against another’s” – that is, a situation in which both the complainant’s report and the rostered minister’s denial of the report appear credible, and there is no corroborating evidence supporting either version. Numerous other reasons may also cause the bishop to call for a consultation or advisory panel or the bishop may decide to utilize such panels routinely.

H. Formal Hearing

Disciplinary proceedings are the process by which the ELCA determines if a rostered minister is guilty of the charges and, if so, what the penalty should be. The process is governed by Chapter 20 of the [Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) and by the [Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings](#). A rostered minister may be disciplined for committing “conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office,” which, according to the [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers](#), includes “adultery, promiscuity, the sexual abuse of another, or the misuse of counseling relationships for sexual favors.”

To briefly summarize the disciplinary process, generally the bishop as “accuser” will initiate the proceedings against a rostered minister, as the “accused”, by communicating a complaint or filing written charges setting forth the offense that the rostered minister is accused of committing, detailing the facts supporting the charge, and describing any other circumstances concerning the alleged misconduct. A committee of twelve persons – six from a panel elected by the Synod and six from a panel elected by the Churchwide Assembly – is convened to hold a hearing on the charges. The hearing resembles a court trial, at which an appointed hearing officer presides. The bishop presents testimony and other evidence in support of the charges, and then the rostered minister presents testimony and other evidence in opposition to the charges. The governing documents of the ELCA provide for certain rights for the accuser, the accused, and the witnesses. Typically, a bishop will not initiate formal disciplinary proceedings unless the complainant and/or survivor agree to be a witness against the rostered minister, but that is not always the case.

The hearing described in the preceding paragraph is the usual process for hearing the written charges. There is an alternative process described in the [ELCA Bylaws](#) 20.23.01 through 20.23.09 that is invoked when the written charges specify that the accuser will not seek removal or suspension for a period exceeding three months. In such cases, the proceedings are conducted before a hearing committee of six members with less formality and without all of the procedural requirements of the full hearing process.

Under either process, the discipline hearing committee decides whether the charges are true and, if so, what discipline should be imposed. The options available (except under the alternative process described in the preceding paragraph) are private censure and admonition, suspension from the roster of the ELCA for a designated period of time or until the rostered minister complies with specified conditions, or removal from the ELCA roster. The discipline hearing committee’s decision is generally made about four months after charges are filed. There is a process for appeals to the churchwide Committee on Appeals.

I. Disclosure

Except in unusual circumstances, the Synod will disclose all serious allegations of sexual misconduct by rostered ministers. Experience has demonstrated that disclosure speeds

the healing of the primary and secondary survivors of the misconduct, empowers unknown survivors to come forward and seek help, prevents the same rostered minister from continuing patterns of abuse, starts the congregation on the path to new health, and demonstrates the commitment of the ELCA to deal openly and honestly with the problem.

Decisions regarding who will make what disclosure to whom and when will vary from case to case. In general, though, the Synod will abide by the following guidelines:

1. Typically, disclosure of rostered minister sexual misconduct will be made to the leadership of the rostered minister's congregation, to the members of the rostered minister's present congregation, to synods where the rostered minister was previously rostered, and to other rostered ministers within the Cluster or the entire Synod. In some situations, wider disclosure to previous congregations, to the entire Synod, or to the news media may be made as well.

2. In most cases, disclosure will be made when (a) the rostered minister admits to committing sexual misconduct; (b) the rostered minister resigns their call from the roster of the ELCA after being accused of sexual misconduct; (c) the rostered minister is placed on leave of absence or temporarily suspended in response to an allegation of sexual misconduct; (d) the rostered minister is suspended or removed from the roster as a result of formal disciplinary proceedings; or (e) secular legal proceedings (civil or criminal) are initiated against the rostered minister. Other events may give rise to the need for disclosure as well.

3. The Synod intends to work closely with the congregational leaders regarding appropriate disclosure to the members of the congregation. The survivor's concerns regarding disclosure will be considered as well. The actual announcement to the congregation will be made by one or more of the leaders or by the bishop.

4. To protect the privacy of those harmed by the misconduct, only the following will be disclosed: (a) the fact that the rostered minister has been accused of, has admitted to, has been found guilty of committing sexual misconduct, or has resigned; (b) the gender of the survivor; (c) if the survivor was an adult or a minor at the time of the misconduct; and sometimes (d) if the survivor was a member of the rostered minister's congregation or a person to whom the rostered minister was providing pastoral care. Disclosure should never include the name of the survivor (and/or complainant) or facts from which they could be readily identified. If the rostered minister has denied the allegations, that fact will also be disclosed.

5. Persons who believe that they have been harmed (directly or indirectly) by the rostered minister will be invited to contact the leaders of the congregation, the Synod, or others who have agreed to be available to those persons.

J. Follow-up

The Synod will work with congregations and others to help ensure that care and support are available to those harmed by rostered minister sexual misconduct. As noted above, Synod personnel cannot provide this individual care themselves, but it will assist the primary and secondary survivors of sexual misconduct to find resource persons and materials that might help them on their journey to healing. The Synod will assist the congregation in dealing with the pain and disruption caused by the rostered minister's misconduct and will help the congregation continue in its mission and ministry for the sake of the Gospel.

Source Links:

Definition and Guidelines for Discipline

https://www.elca.org/About/Churchwide/Office-of-the-Secretary/Definitions-and-Guidelines?_ga=2.49010469.2017025201.1617038639-420238541.1614112875

Report Clergy Misconduct

https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Vocation-Become-a-Leader/Report-Misconduct?_ga=2.134486770.2017025201.1617038639-420238541.1614112875

Report clergy sexual misconduct to Barbara Keller at 773-380-2568, or by [secure email](#).

Sexual Misconduct Prevention

https://www.elca.org/About/Churchwide/Office-of-the-Secretary/Legal-Issues/Sexual-Misconduct-Prevention?_ga=2.116121477.2017025201.1617038639-420238541.1614112875

Create a Sexual Misconduct Policy (for Congregations)

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Create_Sexual_Misconduct_Prevention_Policy.pdf?_ga=2.116121477.2017025201.1617038639-420238541.1614112875

State of Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_7119_50648_7193---,00.html

Anyone, including a child, who suspects child abuse or neglect, can make a report by calling 855-444-3911.

Contact Southeast MI Synod Staff for Further Support:

Rev. Don Kreiss, Bishop	d.kreiss@semisynod.com	248.535.4211 c
Rev. Jen Kiefer	j.kiefer@semisynod.com	734.488.5218 c
Mr. C.J. Clark	cj.clark@semisynod.com	231.670.6946 c
Ms. Robin McCants	r.mccants@semisynod.com	313.618.9809 c
Ms. Beth Fisher	b.fisher@semisynod.com	248.763.9685 c

If a complainant is uncomfortable about contacting the bishop or an assistant to the bishop, or if the complaint is about someone in the synod office, then the complainant should contact a member of the SEMI Synod Discipline Committee listed below.

**SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN SYNOD DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
2023-2025**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Ending</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
BROOKS, Joyce	2027	(C) 313.348.0025 chuckjoyce@aol.com
FOGLE, PASTOR Jim Celebration Lutheran Church 39375 Joy Road Westland, MI	2029	(C) 734.658.3026 (H) 734.469.4190 revfogle@hotmail.com
GREBLE, Pastor Ken Grace Lutheran Church 312 Prospect Howell, MI 48844	2025	(C) 616.460.1122 pastorken@gracelutheranhowell.org
LOCKE, Pastor Janice St. John Lutheran Church 460 Riley Street Dundee, MI 48131	2025	(C) 248.568.1275 jlocke1359@gmail.com
MURRAY, Alex 9188 Cooper Ridge Dr. Davison, MI 48423	2029	(C) 810.287.1278 (H) 810.412.4127 alsylmurray@charter.net
MUZZIN, Pastor Susanna Amazing Grace Lutheran Church 29860 Dequindre Warren, MI 48092	2029	(C) 248.312.8194 (W) 586.751.7750 pastorsusannaaglc@gmail.com

NIEMAN, Pastor Colleen 21901 Beech St. Dearborn, MI 48124	2027	(C) 586.243.2783 (W) 313.561.0168 pastor@stpaul-dearborn.org
PIKE, Scott 5285 Ponderosa Clyde, MI 48049	2025	(W) 810.724.2345 (H) 810.987.7867 smav1282@gmail.com
RUSSELL, Brent 12685 Highland Road Hartland, MI 48353	2027	419.360.6855 brussell@ameritech.net
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WENSKAY, Roxanne 1260 Whitmore Road Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304	2029	(C) 248.505.3455 wenskayrox@outlook.com

If a complaint is about someone in the Bishop's Office, please contact the Consultant for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct in the ELCA, or the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA, listed below:

Consultant for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct in the ELCA

Barbara Keller
[Email via secure form](#)
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Office of the Secretary of the ELCA

Secretary Deacon Sue Rothmeyer
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