



## LCMC - Dual Rostering

+ Bishop Jon Anderson

We continue to hear of people saying that it is ok for a congregation of our synod and denomination to join Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (hereafter - LCMC).

Neither the ELCA nor our synod can support dual-rostering of congregations. LCMC supports having congregations dual-rostered.

If I was chairing a meeting where a motion came to join LCMC, I would rule it out of order for constitutional reasons. I am including the internet link from Secretary David Swartling regarding this issue. He is clear that it is not possible. He suggests taking the LCMC model congregational constitution and the ELCA model constitution and systematically reading through them. He would argue that it is impossible to make an argument that is logically consistent that you can serve both church bodies faithfully. This memo is posted on our web page: [http://swmnelca.org/PDF/Dual\\_Rostering\\_Memo.pdf](http://swmnelca.org/PDF/Dual_Rostering_Memo.pdf)

In our synod's past we had four congregations that joined LCMC back at the time of its formation. We have tried to respond in pastoral ways while also asking for a reversal of this decision. The argument is made that it does not matter. Or the argument is made that nothing happens. I have held regular consultations and sent letters asking the congregations to resolve this issue. As it stands, most of those congregations have taken first votes to disaffiliate from our synod. I would disagree that nothing happens. Relationships are changed.

I am trying to set up consultations with some of the congregations who have recently joined LCMC as part of my work this week. I hope to learn more about the resolutions intent and share my concern that they have joined another church body, just as if they had joined The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod or the Southern Baptist Convention. Some have said they passed the motion to make a statement. I think there are much more productive ways to make a statement than this if people are unhappy with our church body.

A few congregations have taken votes recently as part of their process to disaffiliate from our church body. Until their process is complete I will not be raising this issue with them. Some have taken votes to establish a denominational place they will go as part of that disaffiliation process. Most have voted to join LCMC.

I think best practices for congregations considering disaffiliating would be to:

1. For any congregation considering disaffiliating from the ELCA, please call the church office. We would appreciate being invited into your conversation before you consider voting.
2. Have deep and serious conversations within their congregations about this issue. Voting can bring clarity and bring deep damage to congregations. It seems to me that when the outcome is not clear it is better to not move to votes based on the experience of congregations in our synod.
3. If there is a strong consensus to initiate the process to disaffiliate, then the first action would be to take that vote in a called-for special meeting for that purpose alone.

4. That would then lead to the consultative process with me as the bishop before examining any other possible relationships.
5. If there continues to be a strong sense that the congregation should disaffiliate, then it would be appropriate to consider the many possible Lutheran church bodies in our country. LCMC is not the only option. This is necessary according to our constitution to not end up in a dispute about property.
6. Then in the second special meeting, called after at least 90 days, the first motion considered would be to establish a relationship with a Lutheran church body according to that body's constitution. The second vote would be to consider disaffiliating. In order for people to vote on the second matter of disaffiliating, people would need to know where the congregation will be establishing an affiliation. (It is important this affiliation be established before the second vote to disaffiliate would be successful.)

I would ask LCMC to respect our interpretation of our own constitution and our policies.