

ELCA Committee on Appeals  
Progress Report Concerning  
“Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline”

The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted several resolutions dealing with ministry standards, including the following (CA09.05.27):

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Appeals be directed to develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate amendments to "Definition and Guidelines for Discipline" and the Vocation and Education program unit be directed to draft, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council is directed to approve, appropriate amendments to the "Vision and Expectations" documents and the Candidacy Manual to accomplish the intent of this resolution; . . .

Section 20.70 of the ELCA *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* reads:

20.70. DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES

20.71.11. The Committee on Appeals shall establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline in each of the above categories.

20.71.12. The Committee on Appeals shall present to the Church Council for consideration and recommendation a process and definitions, as required in bylaw 20.71.11.

The members of the Committee on Appeals, elected by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, are: Pr. A. Donald Main, chair; Ms. Madelyn H. Busse, vice chair; Mr. George C. Watson, secretary; Pr. Margaret E. Herz-Lane, asst. secretary; Mr. Gary A. Dahlke; Pr. David G. Gabel; Pr. Philip L. Hougen; Ms. Rebecca J. Poppe; Pr. Matthew L. Riegel; Pr. Leah K. Schafer; Mr. Athornia Steele; and Ms. Deborah S. Yandala.

The Committee on Appeals was directed to offer amendments to “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” that provide a clear understanding of what is not acceptable behavior for all rostered and all future rostered persons of the ELCA. “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” provides the "thou shalt not" for the rostered persons of this church. The committee has sought to use language from both the social statement, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," and from the Churchwide Assembly's "ministry standards resolutions" in order to be consistent, and has sought to be balanced in addressing all future rostered leaders.

Over the course of several conference telephone calls and e-mail exchanges in September and October, the Committee on Appeals prepared drafts of possible changes to “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” (“D&G”) in order to comply with the directive of the Churchwide Assembly. The Committee is providing for your information three drafts reflecting the stages of the process that we have gone through to date in fulfilling our assigned responsibility. These drafts are for discussion only: *the Committee does not have recommendations to make to the Church Council at this time.*

First draft: our initial report to the Conference of Bishops (COB), which met at the beginning of October 2009. Beginning with the present wording in D&G, the committee sought to make proposals that reflected the actions of the Assembly. The COB Advisory Committee to the Vocation and Education unit reviewed our initial draft and brought suggestions to the bishops for their discussion.

Second draft: incorporates changes proposed to the Committee on Appeals by the COB at its October meeting. Having received this important input from the bishops, the Committee on Appeals met again by

conference telephone call and reviewed the bishops' suggestions in detail.

Current draft: represents the latest discussions among the committee members. At this time, the committee seeks responses and suggestions from the Church Council to help inform us as we continue our work.

Next steps: The Committee on Appeals looks forward to receiving comments from the Church Council and again from the bishops after they gather for their annual Bishops' Academy in January 2010. The COA plans to meet in Chicago at the end of February 2010 to prepare its recommended changes to "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline." This proposal will be reviewed by the COB when it meets in March. The Committee on Appeals will have a conference telephone meeting later in March to establish formal recommendations to the Church Council for its April meeting.

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**: The Committee on Appeals unanimously supports the recommendation of the Conference of Bishops that no action be taken by the Church Council at the November 2009 meeting concerning changes to "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline."

For the Committee,

A. Donald Main, Chair

Attachment

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Draft</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Draft</b>	<b>Current Draft</b>
<b>Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline</b> <i>10/03/09 DRAFT CHANGES PROPOSED by</i> <i>COMMITTEE ON APPEALS to the COB</i>	<b>Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline</b> <i>10/06/09 DRAFT CHANGES PROPOSED by the</i> <i>CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS to the COA</i>	<b>Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline</b> <i>11/14/09 DISCUSSION DRAFT from the</i> <i>COMMITTEE ON APPEALS to the ELCA</i> <i>CHURCH COUNCIL</i>
<b>[FOR THE CLERGY ROSTER]</b> * * *	<b>[FOR THE CLERGY ROSTER]</b> * * *	<b>[FOR THE CLERGY ROSTER]</b> * * *
<p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office</b> is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3) Relationship to Family</b></p> <p>This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage, the valuing and preservation of publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and the enhancement of family life. Ordained ministers of this church, whether married, in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, or single, are expected to uphold Christian ideals of marriage, family and relationship in their public ministry as well as in private life. Spouse or same-gender partner and children, if any, are to be regarded with love, respect and commitment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Any departure from this normative</p>	<p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office</b> is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3) Relationship to Family</b></p> <p>This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. This church also allows for the recognition and support of publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. Ordained ministers of this church, whether single, married, or in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, are expected to uphold Christian ideals of marriage, family and relationship in their public ministry as well as in private life. Spouse or same-gender partner and children, if any, are to be regarded with love, respect and commitment.</p>	<p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office</b> is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3) Relationship to Family</b></p> <p>This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. This church also recognizes and supports publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. Ordained ministers of this church, whether single, married, or in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, are expected to uphold Christian ideals of marriage, family and relationship in their public ministry as well as in private life. Spouse or same-gender partner and children, if any, are to be regarded with love, respect and commitment.</p>

<p>behavior may be considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Such departure might include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Separation, termination of relationship or divorce that occurs without consultation with the synodical bishop's office and appropriate implementation of such consultation. Each such relationship must be considered pastorally.</li> <li>b) Desertion or abandonment of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>c) Abuse of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>d) Repeated failure to meet legally determined family support obligations.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4) Sexual Matters</b></p> <p>The expectation of this church is that ordained ministers are to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed. The understanding which this church affirms is that the normative setting for sexual intimacy is marriage or a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship. In keeping with this</p>	<p>Any departure from this normative behavior may be considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Such departure might include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Separation, divorce or termination of a same-gender relationship that occurs without consultation with the synodical bishop's office and appropriate implementation of such consultation. Each such relationship must be considered pastorally.</li> <li>b) Desertion or abandonment of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>c) Abuse of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>d) Repeated failure to meet legally determined family support obligations.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4) Sexual Matters</b></p> <p>The expectation of this church is that ordained ministers are to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed. The understanding which this church affirms is that the normative setting for sexual intimacy is marriage. Sexual intimacy in a same-gender relationship is allowable only in a relationship that is publicly</p>	<p>Any departure from this normative behavior may be considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Such departure might include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Separation, divorce or termination of a same-gender relationship that occurs without consultation with the synodical bishop's office and appropriate implementation of such consultation. Each such relationship must be considered pastorally.</li> <li>b) Desertion or abandonment of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>c) Abuse of spouse, same-gender partner or children.</li> <li>d) Repeated failure to meet legally determined family support obligations.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4) Sexual Matters</b></p> <p>The expectation of this church is that ordained ministers are to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed. This church affirms that for heterosexual couples, marriage is the setting for sexual intimacy. This church also recognizes that for same-gender couples, a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous relationship is the</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>[FOR THE LAY ROSTERS]</b> * * *</p> <p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church</b> is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church (commissioned associates in ministry and consecrated deaconesses and diaconal ministers). These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the standards for these rostered ministries.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2) Relationship to Family</b>          This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage, the valuing and preservation of publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and the enhancement of family life. Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons, whether married, in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, or single, are expected to uphold Christian ideals of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>[FOR THE LAY ROSTERS]</b> * * *</p> <p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church</b> is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church (commissioned associates in ministry and consecrated deaconesses and diaconal ministers). These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the standards for these rostered ministries.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2) Relationship to Family</b>          This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. This church also allows for the recognition and support of publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons, whether single, married, or in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, are expected to uphold</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>[FOR THE LAY ROSTERS]</b> * * *</p> <p><b>b. Conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church</b> is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church (commissioned associates in ministry and consecrated deaconesses and diaconal ministers). These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the standards for these rostered ministries.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2) Relationship to Family</b>          This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. This church also recognizes and supports publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons, whether single, married, or in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, are expected to uphold Christian ideals of</p>

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