

## **Part time ministry call by LDT SPS-01-14 (Final review)**

A call to full time ministry is no less than 40 hours per week. A call to part time ministry cannot be less than 22 hours per week, according to the ELCA. But we need to recognize that a pastor's position is not about hours but about ministry.

When considering which responsibilities a congregation can reasonable expect their part time pastor to accomplish on a weekly basis, it is useful to outline the most essential tasks first and then consider how other responsibilities could be shared and completed by congregational members. Certainly, the most important task is to write a weekly sermon and conduct Sunday worship. It takes 8-10 hours or about a full day to write a weekly sermon. This includes text study time. Preparing the Sunday worship service itself takes around 2 hours, including music and liturgy selections, bulletin prep and review, etc. Worship on Sunday morning is at least 3 hours. Sunday worship takes a total of 15 hours a week to prepare and conduct.

Of the time left, congregations have to make provisions for how to accomplish the kinds of ministries your congregation desires. Typically, a church needs these kinds of tasks:

1. Sunday service (15 hours week)
2. Bible Study and Confirmation (3-4 hours week)
3. Council and Executive Meetings (6 hours a month)
4. Committee/Team meetings and other administrative or supervisory details
5. Pastoral care, including home or hospital visits, talk/counseling members, prayer, etc
6. Pastoral self-care and study, continuing education, attendance at workshops like PLC
7. Communications, including phone calls, email, newsletters, Facebook, twitter, etc.
8. Attendance at social events sponsored by church

List all the things you would like accomplished along with reasonable times these tasks will take. Consider whether there are some tasks that could be completely or partially assumed by church members. Perhaps a supply pastor once a month would help. Perhaps someone else deals with all building issues, like plumbing problems. Negotiate your understanding of expectations. The more expectations you can clarify and write down, the better you will be satisfied as the future unfolds. Understand all of these tasks so far serve the existing congregation and does not include time for bringing in newcomers. Members, in partnership with the pastor, should help to do needed evangelism. As you think this all through, you must also calculate in the need for two weeks of Continuing Education plus four weeks of vacation, which means someone else must accomplish needed tasks during this time (at the very least, Sunday services).

Another aspect to factor in is the matter of Benefit costs. While the pension benefit is a percentage of the salary given, all other benefits, such as medical, dental, and death benefits, are based on the number of persons covered, not the number of hours worked. A congregation must work with Portico to determine the cost of benefits. Since these are fixed costs, the congregation should clearly understand what the benefit costs are before making a final decision on how much "part time" can be afforded.

It may well be with a part-time pastor. Your pastor may need to have a part time job to make ends meet. The job might be something like substitute teaching, or just a straight part-time job at some retail store. Or, your pastor might have a passion in addition to ministry and wish to be bi-vocational, with a part time job singing, coaching, or working on social justice, for example. Whatever the part time job might be, time constraints and clearly defined boundaries are required. The pastor may have limited or no accessibility on certain days, when they are working elsewhere.

It is recommended that you put in place methods to assure that you are honoring having a part time pastor. One good method would be to have a team of congregants that review work patterns to develop ways to deal with compensation times for those weeks in which so much happens (hospitalization, dying, crisis, etc) outside normal work time boundaries. There should be a system to handle compensation time. Asking the pastor to make a report at monthly Council meetings on tasks and time management is another way to monitor maintaining appropriate time boundaries. As you pull together how your church will operate with a part time pastor, clarify everyone's expectations and create a team of pastor and lay volunteers with a written plan for carrying out your church's mission.