

**STAFF SEVERANCE POLICY**

(Original policy adopted by Southeastern Synod Council in Feb. 1990, patterned after the policy recommended by ELCA Conference of Bishops in Oct. 1989; restatement adopted by Southeastern Synod Council in June 2007 and amended in September 2010.)

**PURPOSE.** These severance benefits are to be understood as providing support during the transition to another call or employment.

**ELIGIBLE PERSONS.** The persons eligible for these benefits are the bishop and assistants to the bishop in the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who were either:

- \* Elected bishop of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or
- \* Selected as an assistant to the bishop

and whose office or employment by the synod was involuntarily terminated due to action of the synod by non-election of the incumbent synodical bishop, budget restraints, change of position functions, or resignation upon request of a newly elected bishop. Disability is not covered under these provisions, since disability is covered under the provisions of the Disability Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions. Persons planning retirement and, therefore, voluntarily declining election or appointment, are not eligible for these severance benefits. Eligible persons will be hereinafter referred to as severance benefits recipients.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This severance benefits policy, as well as any changes to it, shall be effective immediately upon approval by the synod council.

**BENEFITS.** The severance benefits shall:

- \* Begin upon vacating the synodical office or position and following the period covered by unused vacation time earned during the twelve months prior to termination.
- \* Be paid on the benefits recipients' regular pay periods.
- \* End as of the date that a recipient begins a new call or other employment, if the compensation payable under the new call or employment is at least 90 percent of that paid by the synod to the recipient immediately prior to termination. Responsibility for notification of a call or other employment and the associated compensation rests with the severance benefits recipient.
- \* Regardless of any other factors, be paid for a maximum of three months for the severance benefits recipient who has served at least one full term as bishop or at least four years as an assistant to the bishop; pro-rated benefits for periods shorter than three months are payable to assistants to the bishop who have served for fewer than four years.

**AMOUNT OF BENEFITS.** During the benefit period of up to three months, a severance benefits recipient will receive:

- \* The difference between current monthly compensation (salary, housing and FICA reimbursement, if applicable) and compensation under a new call or other full or part-time employment arrangement(s), if such new compensation (from one or more sources) totals to less than 90 percent of that paid by the synod to the recipient immediately prior to termination. Responsibility for notification of a call or other employment and the associated compensation rests with the severance benefits recipient.
- \* Participation in the ELCA Board of Pension Plans – pensions at the designated rate, Survivor Benefits Plan, Major Medical/Dental Benefits Plan, and Disability Benefits Plan for the months of severance benefits.

Following the expiration of the severance benefits, benefits recipients may retain their participation in the Survivor Benefits, Major Medical/Dental Plan, and Disability Plan at their own expense according to the provisions of the applicable plans. Solely for the purpose of determining rights to continue benefits under those plans, the benefits recipients' termination of call/employment will be deemed to occur on the date severance benefits cease.

**DISPOSITION.** In case of a difference of opinion in interpretation of this Severance Benefits Policy, the synod council will make the final disposition.