

**EXHIBIT for Resolution 1: Proposed Updates to Compensation Guidelines
Northwestern Minnesota Synod (NWMN) – 2027**

Task Force: Rev. Andy Graves; Deacon Sharon Bridges; SAM Jerry Peterson; Ms. Christine Van Emmerik; Bishop Bill Tesch

1. Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): A 3.5% increase is recommended across all guidelines, with Synod Council review based on current federal data.

2. Word and Sacrament Ministers / Deacons: No changes beyond COLA.

3. Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs) – PAGE 6: D. Salary: Entry-level (little to no SAM experience): \$\$43,470-\$51,750 (full-time). Annual increase: +2% per year of SAM service (in addition to COLA).

ADD: For SAMs serving between half-time and full-time, Congregations may consider offering higher compensation above this range if it is warranted by the SAM's years of experience, educational attainment, job responsibilities and the congregation's financial capacity.

4. Benefits (ELCA/Portico) After D on Page 7: SAM covenants are one-year and typically do not include benefits. Where there is a shared expectation of annual renewal—especially for half-time to full-time service without other coverage—congregations are strongly encouraged to consider Portico benefits.

ADD: However, in some contexts it is understood by all parties that the intent is to renew the covenant annually, creating a more sustained and ongoing ministry relationship. In such cases—particularly when the SAM is serving between half-time and full-time and does not have access to other healthcare coverage—the congregation is strongly encouraged to give serious consideration to providing benefits through the Portico Benefit Services plan.

5. Lay Employees: After G on page 7: Scheduling Consideration: In smaller or resource-constrained settings, paid time off may be difficult to provide, particularly for part-time staff. Congregations should ensure humane schedules that support rest and renewal, recognizing their importance for sustainable ministry.