



A Letter of Greeting and Welcome to Applicants for Candidacy

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) welcomes you in this time of discernment, as you begin the application process toward candidacy and preparation for rostered ministry in this church. It is the prayer of this church that we prepare and guide faithful, healthy, passionate, and courageous candidates. The ELCA is committed to providing theological education and spiritual support that prepares gifted men and women for public ministry.

The candidacy process is a partnership among candidate, synod, seminary, candidacy committee and the Vocation and Education unit. The candidacy committee of your synod acts on behalf of the ELCA in discerning with you the rostered ministry to which you are called: ordained or lay (Associate in Ministry, Deaconess, or Diaconal Ministry). In the Lutheran tradition, a person's individual or internal sense of call to ordained, commissioned, or consecrated ministry must be confirmed by the larger community of the church (external call). By the power of the Holy Spirit, the candidacy process invites chosen representatives of the church to determine whether a person's character, ability, health and wellness, spiritual formation, preparation, and commitment are appropriate for the roster on which that person seeks to serve. The candidacy committee of each synod has the responsibility for approving a candidate for rostered ministry in this church. Following approval, a public call is made by a Christian assembly to the form of ministry for which the candidate has prepared.

Although all application materials for candidacy (including the entire revised Candidacy Manual) are now available on line, your journey begins when you contact your synod office. Your pastor can help you make this contact. At the synod office, you will be directed to the persons who can tell you the details of the candidacy process, what forms are necessary and how to complete them. These persons will also set up your initial interview and provide the necessary information so that you can begin your background check and an appointment can be made for your psychological evaluation. All candidacy forms must now be filled out on line and submitted electronically to your synod. The entrance application should also be submitted to the ELCA. If you are unable to submit your forms electronically, contact your synod office.

When your application materials are complete, including the Entrance Information form and Congregation Registration form, the synod candidacy committee will meet with you for an Entrance Interview. A positive entrance decision is required in order for an ELCA seminary to officially accept you for the appropriate theological program.

The journey toward commissioning, consecration, or ordination for ministry provides ongoing opportunities for discernment, growth, and development of your identity as a rostered leader of the ELCA. Your participation in the candidacy process is a significant part of preparation and formation. The people who serve on candidacy committees are deeply dedicated to serving as partners with you in this important journey of your life.

The church seeks out those who would serve as faithful witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ in the mission fields of our world today. On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I welcome you to the candidacy process. May God stir you with gifts of faith and hope as you offer yourself as a person willing to provide rostered leadership in the ELCA.

Kim Beckmann

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