

# What Does the Church Expect of Applicants and Candidates for Rostered Ministry?

Indiana-Kentucky Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*The ELCA's Candidacy Manual provides helpful insight into the sorts of expectations and responsibilities applicants to candidacy should be aware of as they contemplate this next step in discernment:*

## **Expectations of Applicants and Candidates**



Personal faith and commitment to Christ is at the heart of one's decision to seek to serve in ordained ministry or in rostered lay ministry as an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister. That decision often comes after uncertainty and a lengthy period of prayer and thought. It should involve others in a process of discernment and reflection about an individual's gifts and abilities for rostered ministry. The process of discernment and the utilization of the book *What Shall I Say?: Discerning God's Call to Ministry* are key elements in beginning the Candidacy Process.

The decision to begin study for rostered ministry is one that will be tested, not only by the one seeking to serve but by the community of faith, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A decision to serve this church through rostered ministry is not made alone but includes conversations with and support from a congregation, representatives of a synod, and theological education partners.

A person seeking to serve this church contacts the office of the synod where congregational membership is held to begin the Candidacy Process. A candidate will need to exercise initiative in completing the steps of candidacy and demonstrate competence in the tasks of theological education and practical preparation for ministry.

Growth and development are expected as one seeks to become equipped for rostered ministry. A candidate is expected to be a mature, healthy, and trustworthy partner in the process of preparation, formation, and evaluation for rostered ministry. The candidate provides a signed release to the Candidacy Committee so that the partners in the Candidacy Process (and personal references) may fully and openly communicate.

A candidate for rostered ministry must be willing to serve in response to the leadership needs of this church, wherever that call may be.

Candidates approved by a Candidacy Committee are recognized and available for a first call to one of the four rosters of public ministry in the ELCA. Assignment for first calls is based on churchwide need. It is the clear expectation that candidates are willing to serve in response to the needs of this church. While the church is committed to considering the unique circumstances of individual candidates and their families, restrictions that limit a candidate's ability to serve may delay or prevent the receipt of a call to service in the ELCA. Candidates are expected to make every effort to be able to respond to the leadership needs of this church.

## Responsibilities of Applicants and Candidates

Responsibilities of those persons engaged in the process of candidacy in the ELCA are many. Significant among these responsibilities are the following, which seek to assist the candidate in movement toward a lifestyle that attends to all dimensions of health and wellness and encourages life-long discernment of call:

A. Candidates have:

1. love for Jesus Christ
2. love for people
3. a desire to participate in the mission of the church
4. acceptance of and adherence to the Confessions of Faith of this church
5. integrity
6. passion for justice
7. compassion
8. self-awareness
9. leadership gifts
10. capacity for intellectual growth
11. ability to share faith
12. capacity for critical reflection
13. faithfulness
14. sense of call
15. competence

B. Candidates are active members of an ELCA congregation for at least one year prior to their entrance interview.

C. Candidates demonstrate an understanding of and follow the guidelines for living a lifestyle appropriate to leadership among God's people as stated in the document Vision and Expectations.

D. Candidates honor and fully participate in the established process of candidacy in the ELCA.

E. Candidates shall submit all required documents and information related to the Candidacy Process requested by the other partners within the agreed-upon time frame.

F. Candidates shall fully and openly communicate with all the partners in the process.

G. Candidates are accountable for all aspects of preparation.

H. Candidates engage in the on-going work of self-discovery, self-evaluation, reflection, and healthy lifestyle that enhance a leader's ability to fully and actively carry out the responsibilities of ministry as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel.

