



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA CANDIDACY MANUAL



Adopted by the Church Council

November 2015

With authority given to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in consultation with the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary corrections for clarity and accuracy.

Cover: “Holy Trinity Icon” by Andrei Rublev (15th century Russian)

Commentary on the icon of the Holy Trinity: Contemplation of the Holy Trinity as a relational, sending God is central to our faith and, therefore, guides the church in the discernment that is integral to the candidacy process. The church invites all who engage in any aspect of the candidacy process – applicants, candidates, Candidacy Committee members, seminary faculty, congregations, campus ministries and others – to center on God throughout the process and to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Candidacy in the ELCA

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction to candidacy | 4 |
| Four basic principles for mission | 5 |
| Competencies | 6 |
| Standards for Word and Sacrament ministry | 10 |
| Standards for Word and Service ministry | 10 |
| Candidacy is an interdependent process | 10 |
| Expectations of partners | |
| Applicant/candidate | 10 |
| Congregation | 11 |
| Synod | 12 |
| Candidacy Committee | 12 |
| Seminaries | 14 |
| Congregational and Synodical Mission unit | 15 |
| Privacy | 15 |
| Management of candidacy files | 16 |
| Guidelines for handling disagreements with a decision | 17 |
| Guidelines for transfer of candidacy | 18 |
| Guidelines for people in same-gender relationships | 19 |
| Guidelines for reinstatements to the rosters | |
| Reinstatement process | 20 |
| Application | 20 |
| Candidacy Committee responsibilities | 21 |

Chapter 2 – Preparing for Entrance

| | |
|--|----|
| Discernment as preparation for candidacy | 23 |
| Psychological evaluations | 23 |
| Background checks | 25 |

Chapter 3 – Entrance

| | |
|---|----|
| Entrance components | 29 |
| Wholeness Wheel | 30 |
| Entrance interview | 32 |
| Guide for the entrance interview | 33 |
| Guide for the conversation/questions | 33 |
| Entrance decisions | 36 |
| Withdrawal of entrance | 37 |
| Contact person/relator | 37 |
| Candidate Accompaniment Plan | 38 |
| Guidelines for CPE | 39 |
| Guidelines for students attending non-ELCA seminaries | 40 |
| Outcomes for Lutheran learning and formation | 41 |

Chapter 4 – Admission under Other Circumstances

| | |
|---|----|
| Theological Education for Emerging Ministries | 42 |
| Criteria for acceptance into TEEM | 42 |
| Steps for candidacy | 43 |
| Competency Assessment Panel | 43 |
| Competencies | 44 |
| Admission of individuals ordained in another Lutheran or Christian tradition | 45 |
| Initial application | 47 |
| Guidelines for Theological Review Panels | 47 |
| Ordination or reception of the candidate | 48 |

Chapter 5 – Endorsement

| | |
|---|----|
| Endorsement process | 49 |
| Indicators of readiness for endorsement | 50 |
| Endorsement Interview Panel | 50 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Endorsement components | 51 |
| Guidelines for an endorsement interview | 51 |
| Guidelines for endorsement of candidates attending non-ELCA seminaries | 53 |

Chapter 6 – Approval

| | |
|---|----|
| Approval process | 56 |
| Approval components | 57 |
| Approval interview | 57 |
| Competencies | 57 |
| Guidelines for an approval interview | 60 |
| Recommendation of candidates by ELCA seminaries | 63 |
| Approval decision | 65 |
| Assignment | 66 |
| Renewal and re-approval | 67 |

Appendices

| | |
|---|-----|
| A- Guidelines for discernment | 68 |
| B- Guidelines for psychological consultants | 74 |
| C- Initial Interview Report Form | 77 |
| D- Candidate Accompaniment Plan | 79 |
| E- Pre-endorsement check list for candidates at non-ELCA seminaries | 81 |
| F- Guidelines for internship | 83 |
| G- Guidelines for Word and Service rosters | 87 |
| Associate in ministry | 87 |
| Deaconess | 98 |
| Diaconal minister | 105 |

An online summary of the candidacy process is available for applicants at www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Candidacy.

Chapter 1 - Candidacy in the ELCA

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us;... . (2 Corinthians 5:17-20a, NRSV)

As the Christian church participates in God's mission in the world, there is a renewed awareness that God is making all things new. As both the church and its contexts for ministry change, leadership needs in the church also change. New categories of leadership are emerging and will likely continue to emerge for the foreseeable future.

The ELCA candidacy process is meant to be a welcoming and joyful time for people discerning how to serve through the church. It is a formalized – yet personally and relationally focused – journey that assists people in discernment for church leadership, whether they ultimately become rostered or serve in other lay roles within the church. Discernment is a life-long process, which continually assesses how God may be calling a person into a unique ministry. It is a means to determine who might serve as a rostered leader in a Word and Sacrament or Word and Service ministry, as well as who might serve in a variety of lay leadership roles in the church or in the world. The candidacy process will succeed for a person when he or she graciously discovers, through the nurturance of mentors, congregations and others how and where to serve according to the Spirit's leading.

ELCA seminaries are vital partners in the candidacy process. Some people enter the formal candidacy process prior to or alongside their enrollment in a seminary. Others may choose to attend seminary as a means of discerning whether a church occupation feels right to them.

Some people may even participate in theological education as a means of enriching their current roles as lay leaders in the church. All such explorations are appropriate and beneficial for the church and God's mission in the world.

The ELCA recognizes the emergence of a renewed emphasis upon God's mission in the world in the 21st century. Christians enter into partnership with God's work in the world through baptism into the body of Christ. Every faith community is part of a mission field that requires a common understanding that every congregation is a mission center in which rostered leaders are called to equip through Word, Sacrament and service every baptized Christian to be an ambassador for God's mission in the world.

The ELCA is committed to the intentional identification and support of those whom God has given the gift of missional imagination and the ability to provide leadership in the church. The grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ means that all the baptized, as members of a universal priesthood of believers, are called to a vocation of mission in their daily lives. Members of this priesthood are gifted, enabled and called to active participation in God's mission, both in their faith communities and in the world. Each person pursues a path of discernment culminating in an awareness of his or her unique call. Such discernment often emerges through years of struggle and searching. The call comes in a variety of ways. For some, the call comes in the

form of a dramatic moment of inspiration. For others, it comes in the normal course of a disciplined spiritual life. For still others, the call responds to the urging of church leaders.

Within the context of the universal priesthood of all the baptized, some people discern a call to various leadership roles in the church. In the Lutheran tradition, a person's call from God to rostered leadership is both internal and external. In the internal call an individual senses God's leading to consider and prepare for rostered leadership. In the external call the church accompanies an individual in discerning appropriateness and readiness for such service. Finally, at the conclusion of the candidacy process, the internal call is confirmed by a call to serve in a specific setting (first call).

Through a journey of discernment (see Appendix A), some individuals consider whether they are called by God, through the church, to serve in one of its rostered ministries. Candidacy is a churchwide process of preparation and formation for those seeking to be rostered in the ELCA. Candidacy involves an active partnership among candidates, congregations, synods, seminaries, people of specific culture communities, and the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Accordingly, a mission-oriented leader can be defined as someone who:

- a. is rooted in the gospel,
- b. is knowledgeable, passionate, able to articulate his or her faith and the confessional teachings of the ELCA, and
- c. through the church participates in God's mission of love, redemption, justice and reconciliation.

People who have discerned a call to rostered leadership will demonstrate and build upon the characteristics of a missional leader as understood through a Lutheran confessional lens. Through formation in the candidacy process, such individuals will develop an understanding of four basic principles:

- I. We are church**
- II. We are Lutheran**
- III. We are church together**
- IV. We are church for the sake of the world**

Related to the above principles, the ELCA seeks candidates for rostered leadership who demonstrate certain competencies. During a candidate's process of formation, the church expects candidacy committees to assess a candidate's orientation to mission in a progression from *missional awareness* at entrance, to *missional articulation* at endorsement, and finally to *missional actualization and practice* at approval. Certain competencies listed below have been identified to assist committees in the assessment of a candidate's formation at each of the

major steps in candidacy. These competencies provide a beginning point in understanding the role and forming the skills of a rostered leader.

Once a newly approved rostered leader completes candidacy, he or she may be called to a ministry context in which people do not share an identical imagination for mission. In such situations, a rostered leader's adaptive leadership skills – learned either during the formation process (candidacy) or early in a first call – will help foster a positive relationship between a rostered leader and a ministry context. Adaptive leaders demonstrate an ability to appreciate and celebrate differing orientations toward mission and move together with others in a ministry context toward a common vision for mission. Such leaders are prepared to undertake ministry in any location and are able to assist the faith community in developing a common life that participates more fully in God's mission in the world.

I. We are church

The ELCA is a church centered around worship of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The good news of Jesus Christ conveyed through God's Word and the sacraments liberates God's people and gives them the freedom and courage to wonder, discover and boldly participate in God's mission in the world. In our life together we gather around the presence of the crucified and risen Christ, and we respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit by engaging in ministry in the world.

Competencies

The competencies specific to the new Word and Service roster will be added after the 2016 Churchwide Assembly decision.

Note: The list of competencies provided below is a descriptive narrative, *not* a template or checklist. It attempts to describe the types of skills and characteristics the church seeks for all rostered leaders. Candidacy committees and seminary faculty should use these competency descriptions in a manner that is flexible, adaptive to context and candidate, and attuned to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

1. Rooted in the presence and activity of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A rostered leader nurtures a vibrant faith and relationship with the triune God within a community of faith and leads other Christians to do likewise as they participate in God's mission. This competency can be assessed as a Candidacy Committee inquires about a candidate's ability to:

- engage in theological and spiritual discernment that manifests a faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
- articulate and live out a clear Christian identity, and
- interpret the Scriptures as the norm for understanding God's mission in the world.

2. Actively participates in God's mission through the church. Some key aspects related to this competency are:

- an ability to cultivate a compelling vision for ministry,
- equipping people to share faith stories,
- skills in hospitality that invite people to a life of discipleship, and
- an awareness of the interconnectedness of the church beyond the local congregation.

- 3. Cultivates vision and purpose.** This competency includes:
 - the use of spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, biblical and theological reflection, and spiritual direction),
 - knowledge of societal and cultural trends that can inform a congregation's vision and sense of purpose,
 - skills for leading congregations and other groups in discernment of God's mission in the world (including the incorporation of input from a diversity of sources and people), and
 - courage to lead God's people into that mission as discerned.
- 4. Leadership skills.** Some critical indicators of this competency are:
 - a demonstration of adaptive leadership skills that are sensitive to context,
 - a demonstration of skills for leading a community of faith through change while addressing conflicts that might emerge,
 - a capacity to engage people and lead them toward active participation in God's mission in the world,
 - a facility for encouraging collegial decision-making processes,
 - a demonstration of personal holistic stewardship and skill in equipping others, and
 - a grasp of how administrative structures and procedures can serve mission in congregational life.

II. We are Lutheran

While not claiming to possess exclusive theological wisdom in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, Lutherans proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through a clear focus on God's grace received through faith along with discipleship and participation in God's mission that are a lived response to that grace.

Competencies

- 5. Engages the way of the cross.** Empowered by the resurrected Christ, a rostered leader shows people the crucified Christ through word and deed and enables them to envision what God is doing in the world and in their lives. Some indicators of this competency include:
 - a willingness to confront and engage suffering in the lives of others and in one's own life, especially among marginalized people,
 - exhibiting qualities of servant leadership,
 - a willingness to serve, risk and sacrifice for the sake of God's mission, including an ability to identify and lead in exposing the principalities and powers operative in a given context, and
 - responding to life crises as opportunities for experiencing new life.
- 6. Proclaims the faith.** Clear indicators for this competency are the candidate's ability to:
 - preach the Word as law and gospel,
 - teach Scripture,
 - share the faith with others,
 - provide Christian education for all ages and cultures,
 - articulate theological wisdom, and
 - live a disciplined spiritual life.
- 7. Leads worship and administers the sacraments (Word and Sacrament leaders).** Key aspects of this competency are:

- the ability to plan and lead worship, preach and administer the sacraments,
- the ability to adapt the Lutheran liturgical tradition to local contexts, and
- the ability to demonstrate a manner of invoking in worship a sense of the holy and a welcoming spirit with a view toward God's mission in the world.

III. We are church together

The ELCA recognizes the interdependence of all expressions of the church – congregations, synods and the churchwide organization – as well as a wider ecclesiastical ecology, which includes seminaries, social ministry agencies, campus ministries, church camps and conference centers, and other affiliated agencies. This church also values the ecumenical interdependence we share with our full communion partners both locally and globally.

Competencies

8. Interprets mission. This competency reflects the ability of a candidate to articulate and interpret in a compelling manner, both theologically and contextually, the wider mission of the ELCA through its interdependent partners and expressions. This competency includes a commitment to the mission of the wider church, including synods and the churchwide organization, as well as related institutions and agencies of the ELCA, and facility in interpreting and motivating support for the ELCA beyond the local congregation.

9. Cultivates Christian community, discipleship, leadership formation and the practice of reconciliation of differences. A rostered leader effectively forms and leads Christian communities that intentionally foster the growth of disciples of Jesus Christ and attend to the formation of leaders in the church. Some indicators of this competency are:

- gifts for forming partnerships and networks,
- the practice of reconciliation and mutual empowerment among diverse groups,
- convening and empowering teams for mission, and
- a sense of stewardship in cultivating gifts manifest in a community of believers and delegating and sharing tasks tailored to those gifts.

10. Cares for people. A ministry of care encompasses both congregational and community care. Some key aspects related to this competency include:

- visitation,
- counseling,
- equipping the baptized to provide ministries of care, both within the congregation and in the wider community,
- knowledge of community resources for appropriate referrals and participation, and
- sensitivity to people in major life and cultural transitions.

11. Practices wellness in one's personal life (see page 30). Some factors to consider in this area:

- a vibrant and resilient faith,
- a balance of work, play and self-care,
- a maintenance of clear and healthy boundaries in all relationships,
- an attention to diet, exercise and mental/physical health, and
- a nurturing of healthy family relationships.

IV. We are church for the sake of the world

As baptized people of God, we believe we are freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. This church, accordingly, is a catalyst, convener and bridge builder that views both the church and the world as interdependent in a way that fosters mutual learning and growth. We participate in partnerships for the sake of unity among Christians, collaboration and dialogue with other faith communities, and for justice and peace locally and globally.

Competencies

12. Evangelizes. A rostered leader actively believes and carries out Christ's command to go out and share the gospel with neighbors. Some key factors related to this competency are:

- a passion and imagination for sharing the gospel,
- a sensitivity and skill for welcoming the stranger into community,
- discovering and implementing creative ways to share the gospel with people outside the church,
- listening to people's stories and assisting them to interpret their experience in light of the gospel,
- a valuing of Christian community as formative for faith, and
- a natural and authentic gift for engaging people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the depths of their lives.

13. Relates theology with history, context and culture. A rostered leader understands and interprets context and culture through the lens of Christian faith and leads a community of faith to opportunities where the gospel can be understood and shared by people in specific cultural contexts. Some critical indicators of this competency include:

- an ability to engage culture and context theologically, critically and creatively with a sensitivity to historical factors,
- analysis of congregational and community demographics and trends,
- engagement with complex social and religious issues as a practical theologian in context,
- sensitivity to cross-cultural, intra-cultural, and counter-cultural dynamics, and
- skill in addressing cultural differences.

14. Equips and sends disciples into the world. A rostered leader prepares disciples to discern the leading of the Spirit as they share the gospel with neighbors in word and deed. Some important considerations for this competence are:

- a demonstrated capacity to mobilize people of faith with different gifts and perspectives that can enrich the church's witness in the world and lead to acts of mercy and justice,
- a personal embodiment of the Christian faith in one's daily life,
- a demonstrated capacity for cultivating communities of well-being and holistic stewardship as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel (see pages 30-32),
- a theological sensitivity to the presence and activity of God in the world,
- a recognition of the public vocation of the Christian community in the world, and
- the ability to interpret that vocation to people of faith.

Because this is a time of unprecedented change and increasing diversity, not all ministry contexts will have the same imagination for mission and ministry. The church, therefore, needs adaptive leaders with demonstrated abilities for appreciating and celebrating different orientations toward mission, fostering positive relationships within a context, and moving together with others toward a common vision for mission. Adaptive leaders are prepared to

undertake ministry in a variety of locations and to assist a community of faith in developing a common life that participates more fully in God's mission in the world. The church acknowledges that a rostered leader's adaptive leadership skills, reflecting the above competencies, will not be fully formed during the candidacy process. A well-prepared missional candidate will understand that the candidacy process is the beginning of a lifelong process of learning and formation for leadership.

Standards for Word and Sacrament ministry

Candidates preparing for Word and Sacrament ministry must engage in a comprehensive program of preparation that will help them develop competencies for ministry (see pages 6-9), which includes:

- 1) theological education leading to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or a Certificate of Completion for TEEM candidates,
- 2) theological and practical formation for ministry,
- 3) one unit of Supervised Clinical Ministry (see page 39), and
- 4) normally a one-year internship supervised by an ELCA seminary (see Appendix F).

Standards for Word and Service ministry

Note: Candidates preparing for rostered ELCA Word and Service ministry as associates in ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers will follow the standards and academic requirements outlined for each roster in Appendix G. A task force has been appointed by the Church Council and will bring a recommendation to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly for the unification of the three existing lay rosters into one new Word and Service roster. If approved by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, the standards and academic requirements for the new Word and Service roster will be added to this manual.

Candidacy is an interdependent process

Interdependence within the ELCA means that throughout the candidacy process, there is a sharing of responsibility and accountability among partners: candidates, congregations, Candidacy committees, seminaries, and candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Each partner in the process has a distinctive role but also consistently cooperates with the other partners. They all work together and communicate openly to ensure that the ELCA prepares gifted people who are called by God to serve as rostered leaders in this church.

A consistent candidacy process is essential for preparing candidates for rostered leadership. Every candidate in the ELCA is a candidate for the whole church, not just the synod of candidacy, and is available for service according to the needs of the church. In partnership with synods and seminaries, the candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, in consultation with the secretary of the ELCA, presents to the Church Council any recommended changes to the candidacy process.

Expectations of partners

Applicant/candidate

Personal faith, commitment to Christ, and a sense of call are at the heart of an applicant's decision to apply for candidacy. Prior to submitting a Candidacy Application Form, a person

has discerned a readiness for candidacy. At entrance an applicant will share with a Candidacy Committee experiences and learning acquired during the discernment journey. The process of discernment (see Appendix A) is a lifelong endeavor. It precedes candidacy, continues throughout candidacy and the period of study at a seminary, and evolves into an expression of vocation for the remainder of a person's life. Discernment will be frequently and regularly assessed, not only by the candidate, but also by the community of faith, the seminary, the Candidacy Committee, and others in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and openness to the spirit.

To begin the candidacy process, a person seeking to serve as a rostered leader contacts the synod where he or she is active in a congregation or campus ministry. After completing a Candidacy Application Form, an applicant is expected to exercise initiative in completing the pre-entrance candidacy requirements outlined in this manual.

Growth and development are expected as candidates seek to become equipped for rostered leadership. A candidate is expected to be a mature, healthy and trustworthy partner in the process of preparation, formation and evaluation for rostered leadership. A candidate provides requested information and a signed release to a Candidacy Committee so that the partners in the candidacy process may fully and openly communicate with each other and share relevant candidacy information.

Upon completion of the candidacy process, it is a clear expectation that candidates are willing to serve in response to the needs of the church. While the ELCA 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.

Congregation

Congregations identify and accompany people as they discern their vocations. For people who have discerned a call to rostered leadership, a congregation submits a Congregational Registration Form, which identifies and affirms a person's gifts for rostered leadership. Congregations maintain a relationship with candidates throughout the entire candidacy process. Even though registration by a congregation is an important part of the candidate's discernment of call to rostered leadership, the responsibility for assessing and approving candidates belongs to the Candidacy Committee.

Congregation responsibilities

1. Provide a community that encourages and nurtures the discernment of vocation.
2. Complete and submit a Congregational Registration Form, which includes a thoughtful and honest summary of an applicant's involvement in the life of the congregation and its participation in God's mission in the world, identifies characteristics that reflect an applicant's potential for ministry, and notes any concerns about an applicant's health, well-being or spiritual life. If an applicant is actively involved in a Lutheran campus ministry or other ministry site, it is appropriate for the campus pastor or another rostered leader to add his or her recommendations concerning the applicant as part of the congregation registration.

3. Provide support for a candidate throughout the candidacy process, including prayer, regular communication, and, when possible, financial support to assist with expenses for tuition and other costs related to candidacy. In the case of students enrolled in an ELCA seminary, such assistance is administered by the seminary.
4. Affirm a candidate's potential for ministry through invitations to teach, preach and lead worship based on a candidate's availability.

Synod

On behalf of the whole ELCA, each synod establishes a Candidacy Committee to perform the important and highly sensitive task of making decisions about the fitness of those identified as potential candidates for rostered leadership. Synods provide adequate funding for their candidacy committees to carry out their responsibilities and meet with applicants and candidates. Synods identify people to serve on candidacy committees who bring gifts for welcoming, forming, evaluating and building relationships with candidates. Synods make committee appointments in accordance with synodical bylaw S6.04.

Voting members on a Candidacy Committee include the synod bishop (or an appointee), appointed (or elected) committee members, and a seminary representative recommended by an ELCA seminary and appointed by the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. As the ELCA seeks to welcome and nurture a wide diversity of candidates for rostered leadership, the need for cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness is critical. In cases where a Candidacy Committee does not have people serving on the committee who are part of the same cultural background as a candidate of color, it is strongly recommended that the Candidacy Committee identify a person from the same ethnic community who can serve as a mentor and welcoming presence for a candidate during the candidacy process. In many instances, such a person might be a mentor who has previously accompanied a candidate in preliminary discernment (see Appendix A), a candidate's home pastor or campus minister, a seminary faculty person, or other suitable people identified by the synod.

Synod Candidacy Committee responsibilities

1. Acts on behalf of the congregations of the synod and the whole ELCA to assess the character and qualifications of applicants and candidates.
2. Schedules meetings, retreats and other events for the candidacy process.
3. Works collegially to make important and sometimes difficult decisions.
4. Provides for appropriate pastoral care for candidates.
5. Evaluates and cares for candidates throughout the candidacy process.
6. Adheres to churchwide policies and procedures.
7. Participates in training and on-going education.
8. Provides support, guidance and resources to assist applicants and candidates in their ongoing discernment.
9. Oversees the application process.
 - a. Provides applicants with the necessary information and material.
 - b. Receives an applicant's Congregational Registration Form.
 - c. Arranges for an initial interview (optional).
 - d. Arranges for a psychological evaluation and background check.
 - e. Offers financial assistance to candidates, when possible.

10. Conducts interviews at appropriate times throughout the candidacy process.
11. Makes requests to the candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for equivalencies or waivers from any essential standards or requirements of candidacy, including:
 - a. TEEM program entry,
 - b. educational requirements,
 - c. supervised clinical ministry requirements, and
 - d. exemptions to the Lutheran learning and formation requirement for students attending a non-ELCA seminary.
12. Maintains candidacy files according to procedures determined by the candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.
13. Conveys in a timely manner all requested information to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Having received a candidate's release form, candidacy committees communicate fully and openly with other partners in the candidacy process. Candidacy committees use churchwide standards, requirements and expectations to assess a candidate's readiness at entrance, endorsement and approval; maintain complete records; and report all decisions to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

When deemed effective, some aspects of candidacy may be conducted through a multi-synodical Candidacy Committee. In such situations, each synod maintains its own candidate records. Multi-synodical committees may act on behalf of participating synods for entrance, endorsement and approval and other aspects of the candidacy process.

After granting entrance, endorsement or approval, if a Candidacy Committee receives additional information that proves to be harmful to the church and might have resulted in a decision to postpone or deny, the committee, in consultation with the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, may decide to rescind its prior action. Any decision to rescind a prior action shall be reported to a candidate, the seminary and the director for candidacy. If a candidate has been assigned, the synod bishop in the synod of assignment will be notified immediately. If a Candidacy Committee or synod staff person receives such additional information about an approved candidate after he or she has received a call, the information shall immediately be communicated to the bishop of the synod where the call was issued.

Characteristics of Synod Candidacy Committee members:

- a. faith in the triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit),
- b. a sense of hospitality and the ability to build nurturing relationships,
- c. an understanding of and sensitivity to diverse contexts,
- d. patience,
- e. willingness to receive training and attend/participate in committee meetings,
- f. knowledge of the church and its missional focus,
- g. integrity and trustworthiness,
- h. a commitment to evaluate candidates fairly, combined with an ability to speak the truth in love,
- i. self-awareness, and
- j. membership in a congregation of the synod.

ELCA seminaries

ELCA seminaries, in consultation with other partners in the candidacy process, provide theological education for candidates, including academic certification, practical experience, and formation for ministry. Every Candidacy Committee includes an ELCA seminary faculty representative identified by the seminary dean and appointed by the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. ELCA seminaries provide evaluative material and make recommendations to candidacy committees concerning the approval of every candidate for rostered leadership who earns a degree or is completing Lutheran requirements. Seminaries will communicate openly and fully with candidacy partners.

Theological education is a period of theological, spiritual and vocational formation. Seminary faculties have a critically important and highly respected role in providing learning experiences that equip candidates for effective and faithful rostered leadership with a dual focus:

- *theological* – instilling a critical capacity and an ability to articulate Christian faith from a Lutheran confessional perspective, and
- *practical* – developing leadership skills for the context being served.

A candidate, seminary faculty and a Candidacy Committee are interdependent partners in the preparation, ongoing discernment, and evaluation of candidates for rostered leadership. Throughout the candidacy process, free and honest sharing of information and perspectives is in the best interest of all partners. Additional communication beyond written reports is both valuable and necessary for a Candidacy Committee and a seminary as they collaborate and cooperate in the care and guidance of candidates and make wise and faithful decisions.

Seminary responsibilities

1. Make a decision concerning the admission of a person for study and report this action to the appropriate Candidacy Committee. Normally, admission to an ELCA seminary for study leading to rostered leadership in the ELCA is subsequent to a Candidacy Committee's granting entrance.
2. Participate in candidacy committees through an ELCA seminary representative, who is normally an ELCA member appointed by the director for candidacy upon recommendation by the academic dean. When possible, seminary faculties are appointed to the synod where they are rostered or have congregational membership. The seminary faculty member participates in all Candidacy Committee activities with full voice and vote as a representative of the theological education network in the ELCA. Normally, the seminary provides travel allowances for its representatives, while the committee provides housing and meals.
3. Administer financial aid to students. Funds for this assistance come from a variety of sources: congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide units.
4. Provide required safe church/boundary training for candidates.
5. Participate in Theological Review Panels (TRP) and Competency Assessment Panels (CAP) as requested by staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.
6. Participate in endorsement panels for candidates attending the seminary.
7. In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, direct and evaluate a student's practical preparation, such as internship and supervised clinical work, and provide internship and supervised clinical ministry reports to the Candidacy Committee.

8. Regularly communicate with a Candidacy Committee regarding a candidate's academic progress and provide updates on any developmental issues (including personal growth and formation) that emerge in the course of candidacy.
9. Determine a candidate's satisfactory completion of the requirements for the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, other professional degrees, or certificates of theological education.
10. In the case of students attending a non-ELCA seminary, participate in an affiliation relationship with candidates (see page 40).
11. Provide a recommendation and evaluative statement to a Candidacy Committee pertaining to approval and submit copies of the appropriate report (Form D) to both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Congregational and Synodical Mission unit

The director for candidacy, in collaboration with other candidacy staff, develops and provides oversight of the candidacy process in the ELCA. Oversight includes generating standards, procedures and policies related to the recruitment, preparation, evaluation and support of candidates for rostered leadership. Development includes monitoring the effectiveness of policies and procedures, identifying problems, and proposing revisions to the ELCA candidacy process as needed, registering psychological consultants, and granting all equivalencies and waivers requested for candidates. Other candidacy partners, notably ELCA seminary personnel working with candidacy and candidacy committees, are consulted at each step in the development and revision process. Candidacy staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (normally the region's coordinator for missional leadership) work directly with candidacy committees to exemplify the interdependent partnership, as well as the churchwide nature of the process. While the Congregational and Synodical Mission staff representative relating to each Candidacy Committee does not vote, he or she is present for all major decisions of a Candidacy Committee, unless mutually agreed upon in advance that the representative will not be involved. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit maintains (at the Lutheran Center) an electronic database of candidate records submitted by candidacy committees.

Privacy

The integrity and trustworthiness of each Candidacy Committee member and all candidacy partners are critical to a fair and faithful process for identifying, evaluating and approving candidates for rostered leadership. The collective wisdom, centered in the work of the Holy Spirit, enlivens, strengthens and supports the decisions made by candidacy committees.

Some assumptions can be made regarding privacy in the candidacy process. Privacy requires honesty, good judgment, respect for others and an ability to hold privileged information. It is primarily a concern for the interests and well-being of individuals (as well as the church), not a legal concern. Privacy should not hinder or restrict the free flow of information to and from the Candidacy Committee. In the United States the church has a constitutional right to decide who its rostered leaders will be, to treat certain internal information as private, and to share or reveal that information as needed among partners within the ELCA.

On behalf of the whole ELCA, candidacy committees may seek any necessary information regarding applicants or candidates in order to protect this church and its members and act on their behalf, but also to protect all people from the possibility of abuse by a rostered leader. What is essential is that the committee and its members are very clear about why they are seeking the information. Candidacy committees should seek out whatever information is important and necessary to assess qualifications for rostered leadership. Religious institutions may make inquiries and enforce standards of character that apply to the private lives of those involved in rostered leadership to a degree that is not legally permitted in secular occupations and professions. Healthy, honest and responsible rostered leaders are essential to the faithful witness of the ELCA in the world.

While it is not necessary for committee members to excuse themselves from decisions regarding an individual whom they know personally, committee members must share the nature of any such personal relationship with the Candidacy Committee. In fact, such personal knowledge can provide insight and awareness to the committee in making its decisions. In the case of a family or pastoral relationship with a candidate, a committee member should recuse himself or herself from the interview.

Any and all information regarding a candidate's qualifications, history or life patterns can be valuable in making candidacy decisions. Private information, including personal letters to a synod bishop or notes of conversations, should be gathered with great care, shared as necessary, and appropriately safeguarded. Information and analysis from psychological reports and background checks should be used in an ethical and responsible way. Committee members should be trained in interpreting these reports.

Although some information received in confidence should not be revealed to a candidate, it is always essential to be fair and allow an individual to respond to negative information and correct misinformation. The Candidacy Committee should take all steps necessary to ensure it has dealt effectively and faithfully with any concerns or issues.

Management of candidacy files

Synod records

It is essential for synods to maintain complete and accurate records on every candidate for rostered leadership. The following guidelines provide specific criteria for the management of the materials in a candidate's file – all of which are confidential.

1. Files on applicants/candidates are the property of the Candidacy Committee and should be maintained in a secure location and manner.
2. At its discretion, a Candidacy Committee may allow an applicant or candidate access to his or her candidacy file. The committee may choose not to allow access to confidential communications, letters or other information. The applicant or candidate may read the contents of the file at a location and under a procedure determined by the Candidacy Committee. When a candidate or applicant reviews the file, someone from synod staff or the committee should be present. Copies should be made only as authorized by the committee.

3. Committees should use care when duplicating candidacy file material in preparation for meetings. Duplicated file material should be sent as CONFIDENTIAL mail and destroyed at the conclusion of the meeting. All electronic distribution of candidacy files must be password protected and in compliance with ELCA policies on electronic data filing. **Note: Copies of psychological evaluations and background checks should not be e-mailed to committee members unless the system is password protected. Review of these documents may take place at a time prior to the entrance interview.**
4. A candidacy file shall be maintained at the appropriate administrative office of a candidate's seminary in a secure location and be available to the faculty adviser and Candidacy Committee members as appropriate.
5. A candidacy file transferred from another synod requires a new Congregational Registration Form from a congregation in the receiving synod.
6. In the case of a candidate whose endorsement or approval has been denied or who has withdrawn from the candidacy process, the synod of candidacy will retain the candidate's file for 10 years, after which it may be destroyed.
7. In the case of a candidate who has been granted approval, the synod will retain the file for 50 years, after which it may be destroyed.
8. All relevant information on a candidate – Form D and Form E – is shared with the synod of assignment through the churchwide assignment process. Because the candidacy file is not intended for use as part of the call process, the contents of the candidacy file remain with the Candidacy Committee and are not forwarded to the synod of assignment.
9. If for any reason a candidate is transferred to another synod, all materials in the candidacy file will be copied and sent to the new synod of candidacy. The originating synod also retains these records.
10. Maintaining printed paper files is recommended; however, synods may choose to maintain candidacy files electronically in up-to-date formats. Note: Because technology changes rapidly, synods must update technology so that files are accessible for 50 years.

Seminary records

Seminaries are to maintain candidacy files in a secure manner and location.

Congregational and Synodical Mission unit deployed staff records

Deployed candidacy staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit may retain files on active candidates in a secure manner. The file may include all information in the Candidacy Committee file.

Churchwide organization records

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit tracks the progress of every candidate. Essential dates and decisions become part of the ELCA Constituent Information System.

Guidelines for handling a disagreement with a decision

Candidacy is an interdependent partnership involving candidates, congregations, synods, seminaries and the churchwide organization. Entrance, endorsement, approval and reinstatement decisions are the responsibility of synods through candidacy committees and bishops following churchwide policies and procedures. No individual or body has authority to overrule a Candidacy Committee's entrance, endorsement or approval decisions, or a synodical bishop's decision on whether to allow an applicant to seek reinstatement. If an

applicant or candidate disagrees with an entrance, endorsement, approval or reinstatement decision, a request for reconsideration may be made to the Candidacy Committee or synod bishop, whoever made the decision.

If a candidate believes proper candidacy procedures have not been followed, he or she shall first consult with the bishop of the synod. If that consultation does not resolve the concern, he or she may request in writing, with supporting documentation to verify the concern, a review of the process by the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The latter will request comment from the synod and may request additional information from any other partners. The director will report his or her findings to the candidate, the synodical bishop and the Candidacy Committee.

Guidelines for transfer of candidacy

Continuity and consistency in candidacy serve both a candidate and this church. In a rapidly changing and mobile world, however, there may be circumstances when it will best serve a candidate and the church to transfer candidacy from one synod to another. At the request of a candidate who has consulted with the synodical bishop in the synod of origin and received consent for a transfer of candidacy, a synod may transfer his or her candidacy to another synod, provided the receiving synod consents to the transfer.

A transfer request is not equivalent to one of the three decisions in the candidacy process – entrance, endorsement or approval. A Candidacy Committee may neither deny nor delay a transfer of candidacy solely on the grounds of a candidate’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

Normally, a candidate remains with the Candidacy Committee where the process originated, especially in the following situations:

- if a candidate’s entrance, endorsement or approval has been denied or postponed on other grounds,
- if denial or postponement has been recommended by an interview team or a Theological Review Panel on other grounds, or
- the Candidacy Committee has not considered the recommendation.

A person who withdraws from candidacy for any reason must reapply for candidacy in the synod where he or she was originally a candidate. A Candidacy Application Form to reapply may be accompanied by a request from a candidate for transfer to another synod.

In all instances involving a transfer of candidacy, the committee chairpersons of both synods, after consultation with the candidacy committees of their respective synods, will give written authorization for the transfer. Consultation with the candidacy committees may be done by email or other electronic means to avoid undue delay. To ensure full awareness and the sharing of relevant information, the sending synod shall copy all records pertaining to a candidate in question, including summaries of their current assessment of a candidate, and transmit them to the receiving synod. Whenever candidacy is transferred to another synod, a candidate must submit a new Congregational Registration Form from a congregation in the receiving synod. The receiving synod may also inquire of a candidate’s previous congregation concerning additional relevant information made available since the original registration. If a candidate is already enrolled in or affiliated with an ELCA seminary, the

Candidacy Committee of the receiving synod shall notify that seminary concerning a transfer between synods.

Transfer of applicants seeking reinstatement

In accordance with ELCA bylaws and policies outlined on pages 20-22 in this manual, if an applicant is seeking both reinstatement to a roster and a transfer to another synod, the secretary of the ELCA must consent to the transfer, as well as the synods involved. A transfer of candidacy when a reinstatement is involved requires the concurrence of both candidacy committees and both bishops.

Guidelines for people in same-gender relationships

1. All applicants and candidates shall be treated equitably.
2. When working with an applicant or candidate who is in a same-gender relationship, the Candidacy Committee will follow the same processes for discernment and evaluation as with all other candidates and will use the standards of this church and the “Vision and Expectations” document for the appropriate roster.
3. When this church’s diversity of faith-based opinions concerning these matters is present on a Candidacy Committee and/or in its context, some conversations and decisions will be complex and challenging. Integrity can be maintained best when committee members honor others with differing convictions and keep in mind the foundational responsibilities and purpose of the Candidacy Committee. Aspects of this integrity include:
 - a. treating each committee member, applicant and candidate with respect,
 - b. inviting and expecting candor by all applicants and candidates about their relationships, and
 - c. being candid with one another and with applicants and candidates about whether committee members are able to support or not support the rostering of people in same-gender relationships.
4. In some instances, the transfer of candidacy to another synod will be a helpful tool for respecting the faith convictions of a candidate and of all members of a Candidacy Committee; and a candidate may be encouraged to seek a transfer (see pages 18-19). Similarly, in some instances an applicant wishing to begin candidacy, after consultation with the bishop of his or her synod, may be well advised to apply for candidacy in a synod other than the one of congregational membership. In that case, the Candidacy Committee may depart from normal practice and accept registration from the congregation of membership, even though it is in another synod.
5. It is always appropriate in the candidacy process to invite further conversation about a candidate’s responses on the Candidacy Application Form. Such responses may open the possibility for further helpful conversation with a candidate.
6. In this arena of responsibility, as in others, this church continues to trust its candidacy committees and others to whom it has given the responsibility to discern who should and should not be rostered or called to rostered leadership. Accordingly, it is essential that the committee report to the synodical bishop and to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit any relevant information, as well as any procedural or policy problems

encountered, so that the ELCA candidacy process can be enhanced for the sake of mission and the good of all concerned.

Guidelines for reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA

Guided by the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA,” adopted by action of the Church Council as policy of the ELCA, April 16, 1989, revised on Nov. 14, 1994, and further revised by the Church Council on April 12, 1999 [CC99.04.29], Nov. 14, 2004 [CC04.11.69c] and Nov. 15, 2009 [CC09.11.80]

I. Reinstatement process

- A. Reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is the responsibility of the Candidacy Committee of the synod where the applicant was last rostered.
- B. In the case of an applicant whose previous rostered ministry was in one of the ELCA predecessor churches, the successor ELCA synod has the responsibility. In every case, the process begins in the synod from which the applicant left the roster or its successor.
- C. In the case of an applicant whose removal from the roster was the result of one of the following:
 1. the official disciplinary process of this church,
 2. resignation or removal from the roster in lieu of the disciplinary process, or
 3. application of ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.16., where the person was on leave from call after conduct or allegations that could lead to disciplinary charges, then a minimum of five consecutive years without call must elapse before an application for reinstatement may be considered. The passage of five years without call does not guarantee reconsideration.

II. Application for reinstatement

- A. The applicant provides the completed Application for Reinstatement to the appropriate synod, and the synod sends a copy to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for information.
- B. Upon receipt of the Application for Reinstatement, the synodical bishop will notify the Office of the Secretary and request any pertinent information the churchwide office may have concerning the applicant.
- C. With the approval of the ELCA secretary, the reinstatement process continues with the completion of a new Candidacy Application Form and a new Rostered Leader Profile. At this time the applications may be transferred from the synod of previous roster to the synod of current residence, upon the written concurrence of both candidacy committee chairs (in consultation with members of the Candidacy Committee) and both synod bishops. The original synod will provide the receiving synod with all information and documentation concerning the applicant.
- D. The bishop of the synod in which the reinstatement application will be considered schedules an interview with the applicant. The purpose of this interview is to determine the applicant’s eligibility to be a candidate in the synod. The bishop also determines whether the application is timely under paragraph I.C. above.
- E. In the case of an applicant where inappropriate conduct or allegations of misconduct led to resignation or removal from the roster, the synodical bishop examines the

applicant for indications of repentance and amendment of life as well as indication of or attempts at reconciliation with those injured by the conduct. The bishop also documents corrective actions that have occurred before proceeding with reinstatement. The bishop should invite comments from those directly affected by the applicant's inappropriate conduct or alleged misconduct.

- F. The Candidacy Committee considers an applicant for reinstatement when the synodical bishop forwards the application to the committee. The bishop may, in his or her sole discretion, decline to forward the application to the Candidacy Committee or may forward the application with a written statement of the bishop's opinion of the application.

III. Candidacy Committee

- A. The Candidacy Committee will receive and review the Congregational Registration Form from the congregation where the applicant is a member in good standing.
- B. The committee shall determine that it has received all records and information concerning the applicant, including verification of synodical records concerning the reason for removal from the roster. If synodical records are incomplete, this verification may include conferring with the former bishop, synod staff, or with the churchwide office.
- C. The committee may request any additional information from any source that it deems necessary in order to determine the applicant's readiness for ministry and suitability for reinstatement.
- D. The applicant must prepare an approval essay and submit it to the Candidacy Committee.
- E. The committee may request a new psychological evaluation and background check when necessary; however, in the case of any applicant who has been off the roster or without call for more than five years, the Candidacy Committee will require the applicant to participate in a psychological evaluation. The expense of this evaluation is the responsibility of the applicant.
- F. The Candidacy Committee follows the standards and procedures in this manual as its guide in considering a request for reinstatement. The Candidacy Committee interviews the applicant to explore all concerns related to reinstatement, including but not limited to:
 - 1. the circumstances surrounding the removal of the applicant from the roster, including the applicant's reason(s) for leaving the roster,
 - 2. the applicant's reason(s) for requesting reinstatement with a special focus upon what has changed in the person's life, faith, attitudes and circumstances since the time of removal,
 - 3. discussion of the applicant's understanding of the specific roster in the ELCA and the applicant's willingness to serve in response to the needs of this church, and
 - 4. discussion of "Vision and Expectations" and the applicant's commitment to live according to them.
- G. The Candidacy Committee may request the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to convene a Theological Review Panel to determine the applicant's theological readiness for Word and Sacrament or Word and Service ministry. The Theological Review Panel will make a recommendation to the committee following the procedures developed by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

IV. Decision

- A. The Candidacy Committee will decide the applicant's suitability to serve as a rostered leader of this church. This decision is one of the following:

1. grant approval for reinstatement upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call,
 2. postpone approval with specific recommendations for remedial or developmental work before further consideration for reinstatement, or
 3. deny approval for reinstatement.
- B. If the decision of the Candidacy Committee is to deny an applicant reinstatement, that decision is final. Any such applicant who desires reconsideration must begin the process again by applying under II.A. above.
- C. If an applicant who was removed from the roster under the circumstances described in I.C. above is approved for reinstatement by the Candidacy Committee, such approval is not effective unless affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the total membership of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. After the Candidacy Committee reports its approval and the reasons for it to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, the Executive Committee may obtain whatever additional information or advice, including legal advice, it deems necessary before affirming the decision of the Candidacy Committee.

V. Approval

- A. If approved, the candidate will complete the normal assignment paperwork and will participate in the churchwide assignment process.
- B. If the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit determines that the process for reinstatement described herein has not been fully or properly completed, following consultation with the synodical bishop and the unit executive director, then the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit shall postpone the candidate's participation in the assignment process until all requirements are met.
- C. An approved candidate is eligible for a call for a period of one year after approval by the synod. Any delay occasioned by a postponement under V.B. above is not counted toward that one-year period of eligibility.
- D. The process for renewal of approval, as defined in this manual, is the same as that for other candidates for rostered leadership.
- E. Upon receipt and acceptance of a properly issued and duly attested letter of call, the candidate is reinstated to the appropriate roster.

Chapter 2 – Preparing for Entrance

Discernment as preparation for candidacy

Prior to applying for and being granted entrance, individuals should engage in intentional discernment about a sense of call and readiness for candidacy, including but not limited to participation in opportunities provided by congregations, campus ministries, synods and seminaries. If such intentional discernment has not been the experience of an applicant when contacting a Candidacy Committee, it is appropriate for synod candidacy staff to recommend resources and possible discernment mentors to work with such an applicant in advance of an entrance interview.

For those who choose to apply for candidacy as a result of their preliminary discernment, a written reflection on discernment is part of the entrance essay submitted to a Candidacy Committee. An applicant who has worked with a mentor may invite him or her to share some written reflections with the Candidacy Committee and the applicant, including a letter of reference for entrance, and to accompany him or her to the entrance interview with the Candidacy Committee.

Psychological evaluations

Individuals seeking to serve as rostered leaders in the ELCA shall complete a psychological evaluation. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has developed guidelines for use by both psychological consultants and candidacy committees (see Appendix B). The primary purposes for a psychological evaluation are to provide a Candidacy Committee with insights regarding an applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy and to help individuals gain greater self-understanding and appreciation of their own emotional well-being. A psychological evaluation is part of a larger discernment process that relates to the ELCA candidacy process. A Candidacy Committee is responsible for keeping the purpose of a psychological evaluation in perspective. The desired outcome is an evaluation that candidly assesses an applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy and potential future rostered leadership.

Responsibilities of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit

The director for candidacy and the candidacy team in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit have the following responsibilities:

1. establishing and maintaining churchwide policies and guidelines for assessing applicants,
2. registering and regularly reviewing the services of participating psychological consultants, and
3. providing consultation and guidance regarding particular situations, such as for candidates of color and candidates with unusual circumstances.

Responsibilities of the Candidacy Committee

A Candidacy Committee is responsible for deciding whether an applicant is ready to begin candidacy. A psychological consultant's report is only one of the components used by a Candidacy Committee in making such a determination. A Candidacy Committee is responsible for the evaluation and care of a candidate throughout the candidacy process.

1. *The Candidacy Committee gathers the required information for registering a psychological consultant and submits it to the director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for approval and registration before a contract is finalized.* Using the form "Registration of a Psychological Consultant with a Candidacy Committee," a Candidacy Committee provides the director for candidacy with information about the education, experience, professional affiliation, licensure and liability coverage of the person who seeks registration as a consultant. In addition, the ELCA expects a commitment to the underlying intent of the evaluation process; namely, to provide insights regarding the applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy.

To be accepted for registration by the director for candidacy, a psychological consultant must:

- a. be licensed as a psychologist and competent to sign an evaluation report, or be licensed as a mental health professional (career counselor, counselor, social worker, psychotherapist, etc.) and consult with a licensed psychologist registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to supervise and oversee the evaluation process and co-sign the evaluation report,
 - b. demonstrate through professional education, experience and affiliations both competence in providing psychological evaluations and an ongoing commitment to professional growth,
 - c. display interest in working with the ELCA and an understanding of the psychological concerns and ecclesiastical goals of the ELCA candidacy process, and
 - d. be familiar with the standards and criteria by which the ELCA assesses its candidates.
2. *The Candidacy Committee contracts with a psychological consultant registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for psychological evaluation services.* Any contract should include clear expectations regarding instruments used, fees, etc. Forms or guidelines for reporting should be provided, including a written release-of-information form. It is desirable for the consultant to meet with a Candidacy Committee at least annually to review the clinician's approach to evaluation reports and to provide assistance to committee members in understanding and utilizing evaluation reports.
 3. *The Candidacy Committee arranges for a psychological evaluation as part of the entrance process.* Following the initial interview (if used) and well in advance of an entrance interview, a Candidacy Committee instructs an applicant to schedule a psychological evaluation. The synod covers the fee for a psychological evaluation. As deemed appropriate, an applicant may be assessed an "application fee" to cover a portion of the total costs related to candidacy. Each Candidacy Committee determines the amount of such fees.

A Candidacy Committee must receive a written psychological evaluation report prior to an entrance interview. When there is serious concern about an applicant's psychological health or situational factors, the Candidacy Committee may confer with the psychological consultant.

If a psychological consultant recommends counseling, treatment or other services, the Candidacy Committee will determine whether the recommended counseling/therapy

should be completed prior to granting entrance. If the Candidacy Committee decides to postpone entrance for this reason, the committee may suggest at least three counselors – none of whom provided the applicant’s psychological evaluation – and ask the applicant to seek prior approval from the committee for counseling with a particular therapist. Normally, a Candidacy Committee will request written communication from the therapist an applicant chooses for additional counseling.

4. *The Candidacy Committee considers concerns and complaints about psychological consultants.* The Candidacy Committee should periodically review the contract with a psychological consultant and may terminate the relationship if services provided are not satisfactory.

An applicant who is dissatisfied with a psychological evaluation may secure a second opinion from another professional registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Applicants are financially responsible for such additional evaluation. When an applicant requests a second evaluation, both reports – the original and the second opinion – must be released to the Candidacy Committee in order for the applicant to be considered for entrance into candidacy.

If there are any complaints about a psychological consultant, a Candidacy Committee will notify the director for candidacy. Such notification should include concerns regarding any pattern of complaints indicating a particular psychological consultant who is perceived as being insensitive or inappropriate toward people on the basis of gender, age, class, race, culture, etc. Such notification is also appropriate if the evaluations received by the committee do not reflect the intended completeness or usefulness of the reports for the candidacy process (see above). Such notification is critical for the integrity of psychological evaluations and their continuing helpfulness to both applicants and Candidacy Committees.

Background checks

Background checks are required of all applicants seeking entrance into candidacy. Applicants are also required to submit on the Entrance Information Form written answers to specific questions about personal history and conduct. Recent legislation and technological advances have made it easier to obtain personal information about applicants. Given the unique position of trust enjoyed by rostered leaders, denominations regularly make use of background checks as part of a comprehensive candidacy screening process.

Areas to be covered by a background check include:

1. criminal history database search,
2. county criminal record check,
3. Sex Offender Criminal Registry,
4. credit check report,
5. Social Security trace, and
6. motor vehicle check.

The background check should cover at least seven years. If a candidate has moved during the period in question, all relevant geographical areas should be included in the background check. These guidelines are intended to be the minimum focus for candidate background checks. Candidacy committees may be flexible in determining when additional checks are needed or advisable. A committee does not have to use exactly the same list of checks for all

candidates. Because different background-check firms use varying terminology, candidacy committees should endeavor in good faith to match the required checks with those available through the chosen provider.

Purpose

A criminal background check, or any other screening tool, is only a small portion of the entire candidacy process, which focuses on the evaluation and assessment of applicants. In this process, a Candidacy Committee needs to identify the types of people most likely to do well in rostered leadership, as well as characteristics and behaviors that suggest a good fit with rostered leadership. A Candidacy Committee is obligated to screen out people who might use their position as a rostered leader in damaging or illegal ways.

Candidacy committees should exercise care and good judgment in using information about an applicant so as not to damage the person's reputation or self-identity as a valued child of God. The candidacy process rightfully looks carefully at each individual and assesses and discerns that person's potential for ministry. Background checks are not a substitute for using other screening tools or risk reduction techniques, nor are they infallible records of a person's previous conduct or misconduct. The absence of any reported misconduct is not a guarantee of future behavior. If an individual has never been arrested or convicted, a criminal background check will not reveal anything; however, background checks must include any and all instances of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

The principles that undergird screening in the ELCA candidacy process include fair and equitable application and interpretation of screening tools, which are to be applied consistently with all applicants. Each Candidacy Committee has the right to add specific checks to the basic minimum standards. Candidacy Committees may explore a variety of options, since individual applicants may require different types of background checks. As with all screening tools utilized in the ELCA candidacy process, the results are normally shared with the applicant, especially if there is any negative information. Such practice provides the applicant with an opportunity to explain and verify the information.

Because of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and laws separating church and state, Candidacy Committees have greater freedom in asking applicants questions. Both the committee and the ELCA are protected by law; therefore, it is possible to ask whatever is necessary in assessing future church leaders.

Responsibilities of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit is responsible for:

1. establishing churchwide policies, guidelines, and programs for evaluating applicants and candidates,
2. arranging for and regularly reviewing the services of participating firms that provide required background checks, and
3. periodically evaluating the approach used for background checks to meet changing needs.

Responsibilities of firms providing background checks

1. Any firm providing background checks for ELCA candidacy committees is expected to

- a. implement background checks in ways that are consistent with the needs and goals of the ELCA candidacy process,
- b. be sensitive to ways that race, language, gender, age and ethnicity may play a role in the process,
- c. provide the necessary forms and communications so the process can be conducted in a professional, consistent and fair manner, and
- d. assist both the Candidacy Committee and the applicant in understanding the rights of individuals and the significance of any results provided.

Types of checks to be provided:

- a. **Criminal background checks** should include any indication of sexual misconduct, child abuse, or other serious misconduct. Such checks can be done in a number of ways.
 - 1) Some synods may choose to work through local law enforcement agencies and on-line registries to check on criminal behavior.
 - 2) Other synods may use background check firms that provide a comprehensive service to synods seeking information on criminal and other records.

Federal, state, and county authorities have increased the availability of criminal background information. Technological advances allow for faster, more widespread and more accurate searches. Nevertheless, criminal background searches are not a quick and easy process. Currently, there is no nationwide up-to-date repository of criminal history records available to employers or the general public. In reality, searches for criminal records must be conducted through various jurisdictions throughout the United States, wherever arrest and conviction records are initiated and/or compiled. Information may be available through federal, district, and statewide searches, specialized registries, child abuse registries, and sex offender registries.

- b. **Credit checks** assist in confirming the identity of an applicant. Since each applicant has a Social Security number, it is possible to verify identity information via a Social Security number trace through a credit bureau. Credit reports also disclose outstanding debts and payment history, as well as civil actions (e.g., judgments, liens and bankruptcies). Credit reports provide a seven-year history of individual or joint financial information. Since rostered leaders will be in a position of handling money or other organizational assets and have check-writing or investment authority, a credit check is a reasonable risk-management procedure.
- c. **Motor vehicle records** are available through the Department of Motor Vehicles in all 50 states and most countries. Depending on the state, violations are provided for the last three to five years. Since most church leaders will be required to operate a company or church vehicle, rental car or their own vehicle for business purposes, checking an applicant's driving records is a reasonable risk-management procedure.

Responsibilities of the Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee is responsible for the evaluation and care of candidates throughout the candidacy process, all of which is part of an individual's formation as a Christian and a public servant in the church.

1. The Candidacy Committee obtains a background check covering the areas listed above. For this purpose the Candidacy Committee may contract with a firm to provide required background checks. The synod staff person responsible for this process should consult

with the synod's attorney regarding appropriate procedures and forms for authorizing a background check.

2. The Candidacy Committee arranges for an applicant to complete the necessary forms for a background check. A good practice is for the Candidacy Committee to identify one staff contact person who understands the process to handle requests, receive reports, and maintain an appropriate degree of privacy.
3. The Candidacy Committee arranges for payment of fees for background checks. Synods are responsible for the cost but they may request an application fee from applicants to cover a portion of the total costs incurred in the candidacy process. In addition, synods may request a congregation registration fee to be paid at the time the congregation submits the registration form. This is a tangible gesture of support on the part of a congregation to both the applicant and the synod.
4. The Candidacy Committee receives and reviews the results of a background check prior to the entrance interview and shares concerns or issues with an applicant and an applicant's seminary as deemed appropriate.

Note: The Candidacy Committee will notify the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit if there are patterns of concern or complaints that suggest a firm providing a background check is being insensitive or inappropriate with applicants on the basis of gender, age, class, race, culture, etc., or if the results of a background check do not reflect the intention and guidelines of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for the candidacy process. Such notification is critical for the integrity of candidacy screening and continuing helpfulness to applicants.

Using background check results

When reporting the results of a background check, a Candidacy Committee needs to have in place a procedure for evaluating the resulting information for each applicant and appropriately sharing pertinent information with the full committee. Guidelines for such procedures need to address the types of information that are to be shared with the full Candidacy Committee, what offenses or other information will disqualify an applicant, and what other factors should be considered. Circumstances to consider when evaluating an offense include:

1. the nature and seriousness of the offense,
2. the circumstances under which the offense occurred,
3. the age of the person at the time of the offense and how much time has passed since the offense occurred,
4. societal conditions that may have contributed to the nature of the offense,
5. the probability that the person will repeat the offense, and
6. the person's commitment to rehabilitation, restitution and reconciliation.

An applicant should be denied entrance when he or she has knowingly made a false statement of any material fact or attempted deception or fraud in the application process.

Releases. The Candidacy Application Form contains a release in which an applicant agrees to authorize the ELCA synod or seminary to check references and background information and also permits third parties to release and provide personal information and opinions. A Candidacy Committee may ask applicants to complete additional background check authorization forms as part of the application process.

Chapter 3 - Entrance

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (I Corinthians 12:4-7, NRSV)

Entrance components

The entrance process in candidacy is the first formal discernment by a Candidacy Committee and an applicant of his or her readiness for candidacy. A decision to grant entrance officially accepts an applicant into candidacy. Normally, a Candidacy Committee will grant entrance prior to an applicant's beginning seminary studies. Entrance into candidacy begins a formal relationship in a community of discernment that includes the appropriate Candidacy Committee, the worshipping community of which a candidate is a part, the seminary of enrollment, and the candidacy team in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. As these relationships are formed and cultivated, a candidate continues his or her discernment of call. A key aspect of the ongoing discernment being fostered through candidacy is attendance at a seminary and gaining experience in contextual settings. It is very legitimate for a candidate to pursue such a course without having total clarity about what God is inviting him or her to consider in living out one's Christian vocation.

As part of the entrance process, the synod establishes a file for each applicant. As an inquirer moves through application and into candidacy, the file serves as an applicant's official record of candidacy. At the time of the entrance interview, the file should include:

1. evidence of active membership in an ELCA congregation for a minimum of one year, during which an applicant has demonstrated appropriate leadership roles (usually part of the Congregational Registration Form),
2. information provided by the applicant
 - a. the Candidacy Application Form,
 - b. an entrance essay,
 - c. a Personal Financial Worksheet, www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Candidacy
 - d. letters of reference from a non-family member and from a member of an applicant's worshipping community,
 - e. transcripts, licenses, certificates of completion for continuing education, and
 - f. when appropriate, evidence of payment of the application fee,
3. information gathered by the Candidacy Committee
 - a. a Congregational Registration Form,
 - b. screening reports completed by agencies and other professional assessors,
 - c. a psychological evaluation report (see Appendix B), and
 - d. a required background check (see pages 25–28).

Note: Very rarely, as in the case of an applicant currently rostered in another Christian tradition whose on-going membership in that tradition is required in order to maintain job-related accreditation, an applicant may be exempt from formal congregational membership and may be an associate member of an ELCA congregation. *Active participation in an ELCA worshipping community, however, is required.* Because there is a significant and ongoing partnership in

candidacy between the home congregation and the Candidacy Committee, there may be benefit in inviting a home pastor or campus minister to accompany a candidate to the entrance interview (and subsequent interviews with the Candidacy Committee) and observe the actual interview process. The role of a home pastor or campus minister is not that of an advocate for a candidate but primarily to be an observer and caregiver for a candidate. Such a person can provide the committee with a helpful longitudinal perspective on a candidate and can also offer regular support and pastoral care to a candidate throughout the candidacy process.

The initial interview

The initial interview is an optional resource candidacy committees may use in addition to the communal discernment information gathered in the expanded Congregational Registration Form. While no longer a requirement for entrance, the interview can provide a Candidacy Committee with additional information about an applicant. It offers the further advantage of providing an applicant with opportunity for further discernment and self-reflection, both during and following the actual interview.

Normally, the initial interview occurs early in the candidacy process. Only someone who has been trained to conduct the interview should meet with an applicant for this purpose. The initial interview is most effective when done face-to-face in a private setting to ensure confidentiality.

When used, the report for the initial interview (see Appendix C) is the property of the Candidacy Committee and becomes part of an applicant's file. A copy of the report may be shared with an applicant.

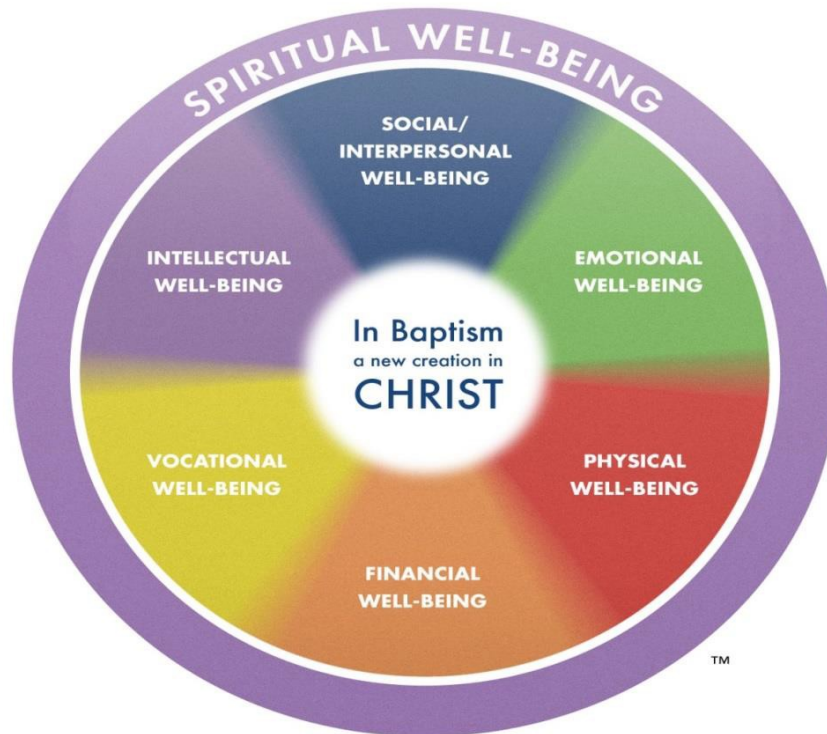
The Wholeness Wheel

The Wholeness Wheel, a guide for balancing all aspects of a person's health, depicts the interconnectedness of individual aspects of wellness. It visually portrays a process that is colorful, dynamic, vital, centered, balanced, contained and inter-related.

One use of the Wholeness Wheel is as a tool and resource at the time of entrance. It helps those in discernment and those accompanying them to understand better an applicant's giftedness and readiness for beginning candidacy. In preparation for the entrance interview, applicants provide information, participate in evaluations, and answer questions – many of which touch upon various aspects included in the Wholeness Wheel.

Candidacy committees can also use the Wholeness Wheel as a guide for exploring an applicant's balance and well-being. Committees review information provided by applicants in the areas described below as they interview, discern and make an entrance decision.

THE WHOLENESS WHEEL



Portico Benefit Services' wholeness wheel emblems are trademarks of Portico Benefit Services (U.S. Patent and Trademark SN 86/238,903, 86/238,971, 86/252,356, 86/252,371, 86/252,365, 86/252,438, 86/257,977).

Social and inter-personal well-being

Candidacy is lived out in the context of various formative and trustworthy communities, including partners in the candidacy process. This is demonstrated in the following:

- one letter of reference from a non-family member who knows the applicant in social and non-work related settings,
- one letter of reference from a member of the ELCA worshipping community where the applicant currently participates, and
- a completed background check.

Emotional well-being

Being emotionally healthy is a necessary aspect of candidacy. Knowing who one is as a person and where one's emotional strengths and challenges lie are significant understandings to bring to candidacy and address frequently throughout the process. This is demonstrated in the completion of the required psychological evaluation.

Physical well-being

Because candidacy is a challenging and demanding process, for many candidates staying well will be a challenge. Understanding one's physical health and the ability to manage it is the candidate's responsibility.

Financial well-being

Financial wellness is essential for a successful candidacy experience and for long-term faithful service as a rostered leader. These are demonstrated in:

- a completed background check, and
- a completed personal financial worksheet.

Vocational well-being

An applicant's work experience contributes to his or her readiness for candidacy. This is demonstrated in the report of all previous and current employment (included in the Candidacy Application Form).

Intellectual well-being

Candidates are expected to exhibit intellectual ability, curiosity, and analytical and communication skills. These are demonstrated in:

- copies of transcripts of all post-secondary education (completed degrees and non-completed degrees) and
- copies of certificates of completion for all continuing education and other professional and academic work.

Spiritual well-being

Through Word and Sacrament every candidate participates in the life of a worshipping community. The latter is an important partner in the candidacy process, because it identifies, nurtures and supports potential leaders. This is demonstrated in the completed Congregational Registration Form, which is neither a decision regarding candidacy nor a determination for service as a rostered leader. Instead, it is an important statement concerning an applicant's readiness to begin the candidacy process and his or her potential to serve in rostered leadership from the perspective of a community of faith. Information provided by a campus minister, when applicable, can be a helpful addition or attachment to the Congregational Registration Form.

Entrance interview

As candidacy committees prepare for an entrance interview, they will focus on many characteristics, including a candidate's potential for rostered leadership. At entrance the Candidacy Committee focuses on a candidate's *awareness* of missional leadership characteristics and God's mission in the world. When a Candidacy Committee evaluates an applicant at entrance, the following aspects of readiness deserve careful consideration:

1. faith in the triune God, spiritual maturity, passion for justice, and compassion for God's people,
2. demonstration of a healthy lifestyle,
3. awareness of both missional leadership characteristics and what it means for the church to participate in God's mission in the world,
4. awareness of both theological and practical perspectives on the nature of Christian ministry, the various forms of rostered leadership in the ELCA, and an understanding of the call to rostered leadership,
5. familiarity with Lutheran congregational life, including a minimum of one year's active participation in an ELCA worshipping community,
6. academic readiness, including
 - a. appropriate undergraduate preparation,
 - b. language skills – oral and written, and
 - c. foundational knowledge of the Scriptures and Lutheran theology, and
7. a realistic assessment of one's potential for rostered leadership including gifts, abilities, and pertinent situational factors.

The entrance interview may not be held until all components of the candidacy application process are complete. The applicant, the Candidacy Committee, and the seminary of

enrollment can utilize various entrance components to identify growth and developmental issues for an applicant and to assist his or her formation and growth.

Guide for the entrance interview

This interview guide describes the flow of a thorough interview process. Each Candidacy Committee may adapt the structure to its own style and needs, while keeping in mind the important components set forth in this manual. These guidelines assume that interview panel members will have read and become familiar with the following:

1. "Vision and Expectations"
2. Guidelines for Discernment (see Appendix A)
3. The entrance section of the Candidacy Manual
4. An applicant's file, including all entrance components

The entrance interview may involve the entire Candidacy Committee or a panel with no less than three committee members. Since the purpose of the interview is to build relationships with applicants and to be comprehensive in reviewing submitted materials, the committee will need to allow sufficient time for the interview and committee deliberation.

I. Introduction

Extending hospitality to an applicant is critical to the effectiveness of both the interview itself and the candidacy process. Hospitality conveys encouragement and a sense of community. All members of the panel or Candidacy Committee will introduce themselves to applicants. Many applicants and Candidacy Committees value the opportunity to begin an interview with prayer.

II. Interview with an applicant

The following is a suggested order for the flow of conversation during an entrance interview.

A. Discernment process

1. Describe your personal discernment process.
2. In what ways has your sense of call been identified and affirmed by your community of faith?
3. How do you understand the particular roster to which you feel called?
4. What do you consider to be the most pressing needs of the church?

B. Readiness for candidacy

More than ever, the church today is seeking leaders with a deep faith in Jesus Christ and an understanding of mission. This means having an ability to analyze context critically, evaluate needed changes, identify new approaches to ministry, and lead people in mission – often beyond their comfort zone. The questions below are suggested to encourage applicants to tell their own faith story and give the committee a means of evaluating their missional awareness.

1. What rostered leaders have influenced your view of mission and ministry?
2. Where do you see God active in your life? In the world?
3. Describe your relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
4. Describe an instance where you shared your faith/God's love with another person.
5. Describe a community or group where you have held a leadership role (formal or informal). What was difficult for you? What did you learn?

6. How will your pursuit of candidacy and rostered leadership affect your family life?
7. Are you open to serve the church wherever there is a need?

In the course of the interview, the committee will also review and discuss the psychological evaluation report. The next following questions can facilitate helpful discussion of this component.

8. What was your response to the psychological evaluation? What insights from it have been useful in your discernment process? Note: Interviewers should be attentive to any concerns regarding health-related issues (physical, mental, emotional or spiritual).

C. Required entrance questions

Because ELCA rostered leaders accept responsibility for protecting both this church and its members, they are called to live in the world as faithful examples of the Christian life. For that reason, candidacy committees need to ask those considering rostered leadership about their personal conduct. An applicant may or may not have self-knowledge and self-awareness that can assist the committee in assessing readiness for candidacy. Some situational factors must also be addressed to invite awareness and openness regarding potential for healthy leadership in the ELCA. Some factors will disqualify applicants, including a history of sexual attraction to minors or sexually deviant behavior with children or minors. Careful attention should be given to an applicant's answers on the Candidacy Application Form and the ways issues have been addressed or resolved. The Candidacy Committee should inquire specifically about issues that could indicate significant obstacles to readiness.

As part of the entrance interview, the committee invites an applicant to offer reflections and/or clarifications related to his or her responses to the required entrance questions. The committee may also raise additional questions generated by an applicant's responses. If the committee identifies concerns related to an applicant's fitness for candidacy, it should make further inquiry and consultation pertaining to such concerns before making a decision. At the time of the interview, both the applicant and a member of the Candidacy Committee will sign a copy of the Candidacy Application Form and the Entrance Information Form. The signed copies, along with any written analysis or review by the Candidacy Committee, should become part of the candidacy file.

During the entrance interview, usually near the conclusion of it, the Candidacy Committee will discuss with every applicant the questions listed below that are asked on the Candidacy Application Form.

Out of care for the church every candidate answers these questions as part of the Candidacy Application Form. Now we invite you to discuss your written answers and share other information you feel would be helpful to the Candidacy Committee.

1. *Are you familiar with the document "[Vision and Expectations](#)"? Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered leader in the ELCA?*
2. *Do you belong to any organization or lodge like the Free Masons or Eastern Star that claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the church?*

3. *Have you completed your on-line health assessment?*
www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Candidacy
4. *What did you learn, and what will you do to remain healthy?*
5. *Do you have or have you had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?*
6. *Are there issues in your family situation or personal life that could adversely affect your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?*
7. *Is your personal debt, excluding mortgage, greater than \$31,500?*
8. *Have you ever defaulted on a loan or declared bankruptcy?*
9. *Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions?*
10. *Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical or other improper behavior?*
11. *Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license?*
12. *Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?*
13. *Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?*
14. *Have you engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to continue in candidacy for rostered leadership?*
15. *Are you prepared to accept a call from this church based on the needs of the church, which might require service in a location different from where you now live?*
16. *Is there additional information that would assist the Candidacy Committee in considering your candidacy or that you believe the committee should know?*

D. Spiritual formation

Spiritual formation has both individual and corporate dimensions. An applicant is expected to be a member in good standing of an ELCA worshiping community for a minimum of one year. The Candidacy Committee will ask about the applicant's involvement in the life of his/her worshiping community.

It is important for the committee to explore an applicant's ability to articulate and be formed by faith experiences. Here are some possible lines of inquiry that could be incorporated into an entrance interview.

1. What Bible stories are especially meaningful for you and inform your spiritual journey?
2. How will you sustain your faith during candidacy? (An applicant might propose a plan for his/her faith life that includes such practices as the use of a trained spiritual director, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in corporate worship).
3. In what ways are you currently practicing holistic stewardship of life?
4. How do you intend to engage in ongoing vocational discernment during candidacy?
5. What kinds of healthy habits for self-care are you developing for yourself?

III. The recommendation

At the conclusion of the entrance interview, an applicant is excused from the room, while the panel or committee comes to a decision and prepares a written statement regarding an applicant. In the case of a panel recommendation, the actual entrance decision is made by the full Candidacy Committee.

The entrance decision

Using all available information, a Candidacy Committee makes an entrance decision. In the case of a multi-synodical Candidacy Committee, primary responsibility for an applicant resides with the synod of candidacy. All entrance decisions should be clearly communicated on the Entrance Decision Form to an applicant, the ELCA seminary of choice, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit. The entrance decision is one of the following:

- **Entrance granted.** An entrance-granted decision indicates the committee's confidence in an applicant's potential and readiness for candidacy. The decision means the applicant demonstrates gifts, abilities and potential for rostered leadership.
- **Entrance postponed.** If an applicant demonstrates gifts and abilities but lacks sufficient readiness (physical, mental, emotional or spiritual), the committee recommends postponement. In doing so, the committee will identify developmental or situational issues that need to be addressed and/or conditions that must be met before an applicant can be reconsidered for entrance. Factors that might indicate postponement include:
 - a) emotional and psychological factors that could improve with therapy or other interventions,
 - b) indications of current substance abuse,
 - c) current or very recent marital distress, separation or divorce,
 - d) a family situation that will be highly stressed by geographic relocation,
 - e) financial stress with a heavy debt load,
 - f) limited familiarity with Lutheran congregational life,
 - g) lack of basic biblical and catechetical knowledge,
 - h) substantial health problems, or
 - i) recent life crises without adequate time for healing.

Other factors relating to academic readiness, including poor writing skills or inadequate undergraduate preparation, will be determined by the seminary admissions process. If the committee has academic concerns, consultation with the appropriate seminary admissions director is advised.

When entrance postponed is indicated, the committee must clearly state on the Entrance Decision Form the reasons for the decision. The committee will also ask the applicant to submit a written plan for addressing the identified issues, concerns or difficulties. The applicant and the committee together will determine how progress will be monitored, when reconsideration may be scheduled, and what procedure will be followed for reconsideration.

- **Entrance denied.** This decision states specific reasons why an applicant is not an appropriate candidate for rostered leadership. The rationale for such a decision may include issues related to discernment, health, readiness or other situational factors. If

an applicant clearly lacks the gifts and abilities needed for rostered leadership, then a Candidacy Committee will consider denying entrance. In the event of denial, the committee should provide appropriate pastoral care at the time the committee shares its discernment with an applicant. The Candidacy Committee should also assist an applicant in further discernment as to where his or her particular gifts might be more appropriately used in this church or in other areas of service. The Candidacy Committee has an important contribution to make in relation to an applicant's understanding of vocation and may need to devote extra time to discern with the applicant other possible avenues for living out her or his vocation. An applicant whose entrance has been denied may reapply for entrance after one year. The Candidacy Committee will at its discretion determine whether to act on such reapplications.

Reporting entrance decisions

The decision of the Candidacy Committee will be reported to the applicant, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, and the ELCA seminary of choice, using the Entrance Decision Form. All reports and decisions of the Candidacy Committee, including denials, shall be maintained in an applicant's file. Such files shall be maintained according to the Candidacy Records Management Policy (see page 16).

Withdrawal of entrance

Entrance does not guarantee the committee's final approval of a candidate. If warranted by written allegations of actions that may prove harmful to the church, a Candidacy Committee has the responsibility to withdraw entrance prior to endorsement. A decision to withdraw entrance is a significant action that ends candidacy. When considering withdrawal, a Candidacy Committee will normally communicate with the candidate prior to making such a decision.

Reapplication after entrance denial

Reapplication must be made to the original synod of application, unless there are extenuating circumstances (see Guidelines for Transfer of Candidacy, page 18). If the Candidacy Committee decides to act on a reapplication, it will retrieve, activate and appropriately update an applicant's stored file. The Candidacy Committee reports any new entrance decisions to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Contact person/relator

Because personal contact with a candidate throughout the candidacy process is essential for formation, growth and personal development, Candidacy Committees need to appoint a contact person/relator who is a member of the committee for each candidate granted entrance. The contact person/relator serves throughout candidacy as a liaison between the committee and a candidate to share mutual joys and concerns. The guidelines suggested below apply to the role of a contact person/relator.

1. Be present for all interviews with assigned candidates.
2. Exchange contact and other personal information with assigned candidates early in the relationship.
3. Be prepared to update the current status of assigned candidates prior to any committee meetings or decisions.
4. Pray for assigned candidates.

5. Maintain contact with assigned candidates through letters, email, telephone calls, visits, retreats, birthday cards, etc.
6. Encourage assigned candidates to share significant news or concerns and provide updates on academic and practical progress.
7. Assist assigned candidates in ongoing discernment of call, identifying and monitoring areas of growth, developing a Candidate Accompaniment Plan (see Appendix D), and sharing experiences of grace.

Because the role of the contact person/relator is critical for continuity and healthy communication throughout the candidacy process, candidacy committees need to be attentive to the activities of these people and the frequency and quality of their contact with assigned candidates. When a committee member leaves the committee, the Candidacy Committee in a timely manner will identify a replacement contact person/relator for all candidates who were relating to the departing committee member. Special sensitivity to how the departure of committee members affects candidates is very appropriate, including seeking the input of a candidate concerning a suitable replacement for the former contact person/relator.

Seminary admission

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, individuals normally apply to an ELCA seminary and follow the seminary's admissions process. Those who consider study at a theological school or seminary other than an ELCA seminary must affiliate with an ELCA seminary before completing the Candidate Accompaniment Plan (see description below). ELCA seminaries will normally not extend an offer of admission to an ELCA applicant until receiving notification of entrance granted by a Candidacy Committee. An applicant who has begun but not yet completed entrance into candidacy may receive a provisional offer of admission by the seminary. Such a provisional offer will be withdrawn unless the Candidacy Committee grants entrance by the end of the first term or semester of study. Granting entrance does not guarantee seminary admission. A seminary may deny admission for academic or other reasons.

Candidate Accompaniment Plan

The increasing diversity of seminary leadership formation programs and related curricula make it necessary for candidacy committees to develop a process for gathering candidate information in order to better accompany candidates. A Candidacy Committee needs access to such information when determining the appropriate timing for a candidate's endorsement and approval interviews. Many candidacy committees already have a good system for gathering the information used to schedule interviews and may decide to continue their present practice.

The primary intent of the Candidate Accompaniment Plan is to strengthen the partnership between candidacy committees, candidates and ELCA seminaries. The model presented below is an option for candidacy committees to consider.

1. Following the decision to grant entrance, the Candidacy Committee will assume primary responsibility, in consultation with the seminary of enrollment, for gathering the necessary information to complete the Candidate Accompaniment Plan (see Appendix D).
2. When necessary, a Candidacy Committee may request the regions ministry leadership coordinator to assume responsibility for facilitating the conversation among partners in

order to complete the Candidate Accompaniment Plan. This may be helpful when a candidate will be attending a non-ELCA seminary.

3. The purpose of the Candidate Accompaniment Plan is to develop a tentative timetable for the candidacy process. Factors to consider in developing such a plan are the timing of endorsement, the candidate's circumstances, and the seminary program in which the candidate is enrolled.
4. Participants may use distance conferencing media to avoid excessive time and expense.

Copies of a completed plan for each candidate will be kept by the Candidacy Committee, the seminary of enrollment and the candidate.

Guidelines for supervised clinical ministry

Introduction

The ELCA requires all candidates for Word and Sacrament ministry to complete one unit of supervised clinical ministry. Candidates normally complete this unit before endorsement and must meet this requirement prior to internship and approval. The preferred way for meeting this requirement is a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Other recognized accrediting bodies include the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) and the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE).

Supervised clinical ministry offers candidates an opportunity to experience learning in direct, integrated ways while practicing the art of pastoral ministry. Among the benefits of such a learning experience are growths in pastoral identity, self-understanding and theological reflection. Interaction with peers and a supervisor in an interpersonal learning group is a key feature of the experience.

The Candidacy Committee, in consultation with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, evaluates and approves alternative programs and equivalencies in advance. Candidates who opt for a non-accredited program should be mindful that it will not fulfill the unit of CPE required for admission to an ACPE residency. This may have important implications for candidates considering future training leading to ecclesiastical endorsement and certification in specialized pastoral care ministry.

The seminary has primary responsibility for the management and administration of this educational requirement.

Standards

The standards for an approved supervised clinical ministry program include, but are not limited to:

1. a specified time period of no less than 400 hours,
2. active reporting and evaluation of one's practice of ministry, utilizing a small peer group and individual supervision,
3. a supervisor who is trained, qualified and credentialed,
4. an inductive, experiential model of learning that uses the clinical/case method and focuses on one's whole person in the practice of ministry,
5. learning the art of pastoral and spiritual care,

6. an individual contract for learning, developed collaboratively by the student and supervisor, that includes:
 - a. a theology of pastoral ministry,
 - b. self-understanding and self-integration as demonstrated in the Wholeness Wheel,
 - c. identification of personal strengths and weaknesses in pastoral care,
 - d. participation in a peer group in order to give and receive supportive and challenging feedback,
 - e. working collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to develop pastoral identity and authority, and
 - f. clear and specific goals for continuing pastoral formation.

Guidelines for students attending non-ELCA seminaries

All candidates preparing for rostered leadership are expected to demonstrate and build upon the characteristics of an ELCA missional leader listed under each of the four basic principles outlined on pages 5-10 in this manual. To develop and strengthen these characteristics, candidates are strongly encouraged to earn a Master of Divinity degree at an ELCA seminary. Some candidates may elect to attend a non-ELCA seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS). These candidates follow all the candidacy steps outlined in this manual. Because developing a Lutheran confessional understanding is important for ministry in the ELCA, candidates are required to participate in structured Lutheran learning and formation opportunities approved by an ELCA seminary. Such learning opportunities may include online courses and cohort groups offered by one of our ELCA seminaries, or approved Lutheran learning opportunities offered at non-ELCA seminaries. ELCA candidates attending non-ELCA seminaries may also satisfy Lutheran learning and formation requirements at an ELCIC seminary (ELCA Constitution – 7.31.13.b).

Students attending non-ELCA seminaries must affiliate with an ELCA or ELCIC seminary after being granted entrance. Failure to affiliate early in the candidacy process will delay endorsement, approval, assignment and first call. At least one year must elapse between endorsement and approval. Affiliation assists a candidate in understanding the variety of ways ELCA seminaries, in collaboration with synods, have developed to fulfill the Lutheran learning and formation requirements. Affiliation assists candidates with:

- identifying an appropriate CPE program,
- identifying and receiving oversight of the required internship,
- selecting approved Lutheran learning and formation opportunities offered at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary, or at the non-ELCA seminary where a candidate is registered,
- facilitating the process for ELCA/ELCIC seminary faculty recommendation required at approval (Form D).

After being granted entrance by a Candidacy Committee and being admitted to an accredited non-ELCA seminary, the candidate works with a Candidacy Committee representative, the dean/faculty of the ELCA seminary of affiliation and the non-ELCA seminary to complete the Candidate Accompaniment Plan and identify how the Lutheran learning and formation requirements will be met (see Appendix D). Every student attending a non-ELCA seminary is charged a one-time affiliation fee collected by the seminary of affiliation. The Candidacy

Committee may request the regions coordinator for missional leadership to work with the candidate and appropriate seminary representatives to develop the plan, which can help the Candidacy Committee, seminary, and candidate identify approximate timing for CPE, endorsement, internship and approval. The completed plan becomes part of the candidate's file. The synod will send copies of the plan to the ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation. A synod that already has a system in place for gathering the information requested on the Candidate Accompaniment Plan may continue to use it.

Outcomes for Lutheran learning and formation

The expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation occur not only in the classroom but also through the total teaching/learning experience at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary (or at another seminary program approved by an ELCA seminary). The outcomes are:

1. a solid grounding in Lutheran systematic theology and the Lutheran Confessions,
2. the articulation of a Lutheran theological perspective through the study of theology, church history, Bible, worship, preaching, Christian education, pastoral care and ethics,
3. a holistic understanding of ministry in a Lutheran context, including the integrity and varieties of Lutheran worship, and familiarity with policies and practices associated with ELCA polity, assignment, call and mobility, and
4. participation in current theological conversations within the ELCA, including establishing relationships with future colleagues characterized by mutual support and consolation, accountability and a clear sense of shared mission.

The Lutheran learning and formation guided by an ELCA seminary is a constitutional requirement of the ELCA and will normally not be waived or reduced in length (ELCA Constitution – 7.31.13.b). It may be possible for a candidate with a Master of Divinity degree from a non-ELCA seminary to earn an advanced degree while fulfilling the Lutheran learning objectives during a year of learning and formation at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary. A candidate seeking to earn an advanced degree while in residency must also complete admission requirements at the ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation.

Rarely will a full or partial waiver of the Lutheran learning and formation requirement be granted by a Candidacy Committee, but only after receiving a recommendation for waiver from a special TRP or similar panel convened for this specific purpose (see page 47). To assist the panel in making an informed recommendation, a candidate will participate in the interview and provide samples of academic papers and other written documents that provide sufficient evidence that the Lutheran learning and formation outcomes listed above have been fulfilled. If a waiver is granted, the Candidacy Committee will inform the director for candidacy in writing. A decision to waive the Lutheran learning and formation requirement must occur at endorsement and does not alter the requirements for an internship supervised through an ELCA/ELCIC seminary and a supervised clinical ministry experience. Candidates for whom the Lutheran learning and formation requirement has been waived must still receive a faculty recommendation from an ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation (Form D) in order to be approved.

CPE/internship

For candidates enrolled at non-ELCA seminaries, the ELCA seminary of affiliation, in consultation with the non-ELCA seminary and the appropriate Candidacy Committee, arranges the CPE experience and determines the timing of the internship year (see Appendix F).

Chapter 4 - Admission under Other Circumstances

Theological Education for Emerging Ministries

Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) is a leadership formation process in the ELCA designed for those who meet the established criteria. Authorized in the ELCA Constitution (7:31.14) and described in the Study of Ministry (2003), the Study of Theological Education (1993; 1995), and the ELCA's Plan for Mission adopted at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, the TEEM process responds to ministry needs of the ELCA.

TEEM candidates do not self-identify. Consideration for admittance into the TEEM process begins with the granting of entrance by a Candidacy Committee followed by a recommendation from a synod bishop (see below). The director for candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit then grants acceptance of a candidate into the TEEM process, when the criteria for acceptance listed below are met.

Criteria for acceptance into TEEM

A person seeking to complete all the academic and practical requirements for Word and Sacrament ministry through the TEEM process will demonstrate the characteristics outlined on pages 5-10 of this manual. Every candidate participating in the TEEM process must be serving in an emerging ministry site identified by a synod bishop.

What is an emerging ministry?

Emerging ministries are Word and Sacrament communities that meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. ethnic-specific, multicultural, or recent immigrant ministries,
2. small membership rural or urban congregations where a synod bishop has had difficulty identifying and placing a candidate for call,
3. new mission starts authorized through normal ELCA processes,
4. redevelopment ministries authorized through normal ELCA processes, and
5. ministries with people who are differently abled.

The TEEM process

TEEM candidates complete all the steps in the candidacy process outlined in this manual. A candidate's admittance into TEEM occurs only after the steps listed below have been completed.

1. A synod bishop provides a letter recommending a candidate for admission into the TEEM process.
2. A bishop's letter of recommendation must identify a specific ministry site where a candidate will serve. The same ministry site will serve as both the candidate's teaching parish experience and the site for a supervised internship.
3. The director for candidacy must accept a candidate into the TEEM process following the granting of entrance.

After TEEM candidates complete the academic and practical ministry requirements and are granted approval by a Candidacy Committee, they normally serve their first call in the ministry site identified by a synodical bishop. Following first call, the opportunities for mobility are the same as for all ELCA rostered leaders.

Steps in candidacy for TEEM

1. Candidates for the TEEM process must be granted entrance by a Candidacy Committee. In preparation for an entrance interview, the following are required:
 - a. a Candidacy Application Form and Entrance Information Form,
 - b. a Congregational Registration Form,
 - c. a background check,
 - d. a psychological evaluation, and
 - e. an entrance essay.
2. Following the granting of entrance, a Candidacy Committee sends the following documentation to the director for candidacy:
 - a. the Entrance Decision Form,
 - b. the entrance essay, and
 - c. a bishop's letter of recommendation identifying the ministry site where a candidate will be serving.
3. After review of the documentation, the director for candidacy sends a synodical bishop and the Candidacy Committee a written notification of acceptance or rejection into TEEM with copies to the region's coordinator for missional leadership. Candidates not accepted into TEEM may continue the candidacy process by applying for admission into a Master of Divinity program at an accredited seminary.

Competency Assessment Panel

Following notification of a candidate's acceptance into the TEEM process, the region's coordinator for missional leadership normally convenes a Competency Assessment Panel (CAP) with faculty from a seminary that offers a TEEM curriculum. When a CAP is convened in a synod, the synod will be responsible for travel costs for seminary faculty asked to serve on a CAP. In some cases a synod may request the region's coordinator for missional leadership to convene a CAP using electronic technology. The primary responsibility of a CAP is to assess a candidate's knowledge and leadership abilities in each of the competency areas identified below. In conversation with a candidate, a CAP will identify the academic work needed to strengthen a candidate's ministry skills. The panel does not have authority to reverse a Candidacy Committee's entrance decision. A CAP normally includes:

- a. the seminary TEEM director and one seminary faculty person,
- b. a synodical bishop or his/her designee,
- c. a Candidacy Committee member,
- d. a CSM candidacy staff person,
- e. when a candidate is a person of color, a member from the appropriate ethnic community, and
- f. when a candidate is an approved lay mission developer, the synod's director for evangelical mission.

The seminary TEEM director normally serves as a candidate's faculty adviser accompanying him or her to completion of the candidacy process.

The number of CAP meetings with a candidate varies depending on synod and seminary expectations. Normally, a CAP will meet with a candidate at the beginning of the process, at endorsement, and again prior to approval. Communication technologies, such as conference calls and online meetings, may be used to facilitate CAP meetings.

4. Endorsement

At approximately the mid-point of the process, a TEEM candidate participates in an endorsement interview with a CAP, which serves as an endorsement panel and makes a recommendation concerning endorsement to the Candidacy Committee. Endorsement is a pivotal point in the candidacy process because it provides a Candidacy Committee with an opportunity to assess a candidate's progress and readiness to complete candidacy. Prior to the interview, a candidate completes an endorsement essay. The TEEM director, or in some cases the faculty adviser, participates in the panel. Based on a CAP recommendation, the Candidacy Committee makes an endorsement decision.

5. Approval

When a candidate successfully completes a program of study, a CAP acts on behalf of the seminary faculty and completes the approval recommendation (Form D). The Candidacy Committee then follows the regular process for approval, including an approval essay and interview. The granting of approval by a Candidacy Committee is required for completion of the TEEM process.

6. Assignment

Following being granted approval and completing the necessary assignment forms, TEEM candidates participate in the churchwide assignment process, which administratively assigns them to the synod where their ministry site is located. If a TEEM candidate is granted an approval and the ministry site where the candidate is serving is no longer able to extend a call, he or she enters the regular churchwide assignment process to seek assignment and first call.

Competencies

A CAP assesses a candidate's understanding of Lutheran confessional theology and identifies additional resources and course work that will strengthen a candidate's ability to integrate Lutheran theological understandings with the praxis of ministry. The following competencies are assessed by a CAP:

1. Bible – skills for understanding and interpreting Scripture through a Lutheran hermeneutic.
2. Theology and ethics – an ability to reflect critically through Lutheran theological and ethical lenses.
3. Lutheran Confessions – an ability to teach the foundational teachings of the Lutheran church.
4. Church history – a basic understanding of the history of Lutheranism in the United States.
5. Worship – an ability to lead worship, preach and serve as a spiritual leader.
6. Teaching – an ability to teach the Christian faith to others.
7. Evangelical mission and stewardship – skills and knowledge for leading and developing communities of faith in responding to God's mission through outreach and the practice of holistic stewardship.
8. ELCA structure and polity– an understanding of the interrelationship among all expressions of the church.
9. Administration – basic church administrative skills.
10. Service – a commitment to justice and skills for addressing hunger and poverty.
11. Pastoral care – knowledge, skill and experience in providing basic pastoral care to people in various life circumstances, as well as the ability to lead and prepare others to provide appropriate ministries of care.

Seminary experience

Seminary TEEM programs provide:

1. a solid grounding in Lutheran theology and the Lutheran Confessions to enable a candidate to articulate a Lutheran theological perspective,
2. a firm understanding of ministry and mission in a Lutheran context, including the integrity and variety of Lutheran worship,
3. opportunity for a candidate to participate in current theological conversations and establish relationships with future colleagues in ministry, and
4. participation in the seminary's boundary and safe church workshops or the equivalent offered by a synod.

Internship

Following entrance and in the first year in ministry a TEEM candidate receives supervision mutually agreed upon by the Candidacy Committee and the seminary in the site where he or she is presently serving. Supervision provides a TEEM candidate with an opportunity to receive structured feedback from an experienced pastor. The seminary internship evaluations or other structured feedback forms are normally completed during a candidate's second year of service in a ministry site and sent to the appropriate Candidacy Committee and the seminary TEEM director.

Supervised clinical ministry

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is important for the development of pastoral care skills. The CPE program selected must be sensitive to and understand a candidate's culture and ministry responsibilities. When a ministry setting would be negatively affected by a candidate's prolonged absence, or when a regular CPE program is not available, a Candidacy Committee may recommend an alternative contextualized CPE program in consultation with a CAP.

Admission of applicants ordained to Word and Sacrament ministry in another Lutheran church or in another Christian church body

Sections I-VII below are from "Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the ELCA," originally adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 16, 1989 [CC89.04.54], and adopted, as revised, by the Church Council, Nov. 14, 1994 [CC94.11.86].

For those ordained to Word and Sacrament ministry in another Lutheran church body or in another Christian tradition, the Candidacy Committee honors the background of every candidate who seeks to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA and provides hospitality and orientation to the candidacy process. The latter provides an opportunity to engage in mutual conversations with a focus on discernment and assessment. The particular needs of this church are important in determining who will be approved. The mission of the ELCA involves worship, nurture, outreach, service and advocacy for justice. While the scope of this mission is global, its particular focus is on ministry in the United States and the Caribbean. It is essential to have leaders who are familiar with and have experience in the cultural context of the ELCA. Candidates need to appreciate and be familiar with ELCA teachings, polity, liturgy and traditions.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Following certification of good standing on the roster of the ELCIC and with the approval of the bishop of the ELCA synod in which a

candidate will serve, Word and Sacrament ministers of the ELCIC are received by transfer, upon acceptance of a valid call from an ELCA congregation, a synod council, or the Church Council of the ELCA. This process is not a Candidacy Committee responsibility.

Full communion partners. The availability of Word and Sacrament ministers from church bodies that are in full communion with the ELCA is not a candidacy matter. Guidelines for such exchange can be found in the Orderly Exchange documents of this church. When a Word and Sacrament minister of a full communion partner church seeks to be rostered in the ELCA, a Candidacy Committee will follow the candidacy process according to the procedures outlined below. If such a Word and Sacrament minister has already served in an ELCA congregation, such experience should be acknowledged.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF) partners. Many Word and Sacrament ministers of LWF churches serve in the ELCA through short-term or temporary arrangements with ELCA congregations or synods. Although such programs can benefit both Lutheran churches involved, these matters are not candidacy concerns.

A Candidacy Committee may consider the application of a Word and Sacrament minister of an LWF church seeking to commit to long-term service within the ELCA. Early consultation with the Global Mission unit is essential in such cases. Any concerns related to agreements or implications for the churches involved can be identified and considered when there is open communication among the partners.

The candidacy process should always include a deep respect for the credentials and background of those seeking to be rostered in the ELCA. Credentials need to be examined in order to ensure that an applicant has good standing in the partner church and possesses good moral character. For applicants who come from outside the United States, there are additional factors to consider, such as length of time in the United States, familiarity with American culture, and prior service in the ELCA.

Other Lutheran church partners. Word and Sacrament ministers of other Lutheran churches should be treated with dignity and respect. The perspective of an individual with such credentials can enrich the ELCA and broaden an understanding of mission. The primary foci of the candidacy process in such situations are evaluation for suitability, screening and orientation to the ELCA. The procedures Candidacy Committees follow are outlined below.

Other Christian traditions. Word and Sacrament ministers who serve in other Christian traditions may be admitted to the roster of the ELCA if they meet and maintain standards for Word and Sacrament ministers and are committed to the confession of faith of this church. The appropriate candidacy procedures appear below.

Policy and procedures

I. Basic standards for Word and Sacrament ministers

- A. According to ELCA bylaw 7.31.11, individuals admitted to the ELCA roster of Word and Sacrament ministers shall satisfactorily meet and maintain:

1. commitment to Christ,
2. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church,
3. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church,
4. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships,
5. commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living,
6. membership in an ELCA congregation, and
7. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call.

II. Initial application

- A. Application for candidacy occurs in the synod of residence. In the case of someone who does not reside in the United States, application may be made to a synod where there is a familial or mentor relationship or a request may be made to the Conference of Bishops for a synodical assignment. Synods should consult with the Global Mission unit regarding candidates from outside the United States (other than the ELCIC).
- B. The applicant provides the Candidacy Committee with the following information:
 1. the Candidacy Application Form , the Entrance Information Form, and the Application Form for Persons from Another Lutheran Church or Christian Tradition,
 2. academic transcripts for all post-secondary education (degree or non-degree),
 3. certificates of study (if any),
 4. documentation of supervised field experience (i.e. internship, clinical education, etc.),
 5. a statement or certificate of Word and Sacrament status in another Lutheran church body or Christian tradition,
 6. a letter of reference from an applicant's current or former ecclesiastical supervisor,
 7. proper documentation (for those seeking to immigrate to the United States),
 8. a completed psychological evaluation and background check,
 9. a recent sermon,
 10. a personal statement, including the theological rationale for why the applicant seeks to serve on the Word and Sacrament roster of the ELCA, and
 11. a recent photograph.
- C. Upon receipt of the foregoing information, a synod bishop, in consultation with the Candidacy Committee, arranges an interview with an applicant. The purpose of the interview is to determine an applicant's readiness to enter the ELCA candidacy process. Entrance into candidacy is based upon the adequacy of the information provided and an applicant's intention to serve as a Word and Sacrament minister of the ELCA. If an applicant comes from an overseas church with formal relations with the ELCA, the Candidacy Committee will consult with the Global Mission unit for the purpose of receiving additional information regarding an applicant available from the appropriate church body. After completing the interview and receiving the required information, the Candidacy Committee considers an applicant for entrance followed by endorsement after receiving a recommendation from the TRP (see below).

III. Theological Review Panel/endorsement

- A. After granting entrance to a candidate, a Candidacy Committee requests the

Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to convene a Theological Review Panel (TRP). Such a panel normally includes the seminary representative serving on the Candidacy Committee, another seminary faculty person, representatives from the Candidacy Committee, an ethnic or community representative (if appropriate), an interpreter (if needed), and the region's coordinator for missional leadership, who serves as convener. The TRP may be convened either on the territory of the synod or at an ELCA seminary. The convener submits a report from the TRP to the Candidacy Committee and the director for candidacy.

- B. The TRP, following an interview with a candidate, makes a recommendation to the Candidacy Committee concerning endorsement and components for completing candidacy. Recommendations from the panel may include:
 - 1. immediate recommendation for an approval interview with no additional requirements,
 - 2. a plan of preparation followed by an approval interview,
 - 3. a plan of preparation with a follow-up interview with the same TRP prior to the approval interview, or
 - 4. a recommendation for postponement or denial of endorsement.
- C. The panel informs the Candidacy Committee and a candidate in writing of its recommendations. The Candidacy Committee then acts on the recommendations at its next regular meeting.

IV. Approval

When a candidate successfully completes the recommendations of the TRP, the Candidacy Committee considers a candidate for approval. A Candidacy Committee reports an approval decision in writing to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The candidate completes the churchwide assignment forms in order to be assigned to a region and a synod for first call.

V. Ordination or reception of a candidate

- A. After a candidate receives and accepts a letter of call, the synodical bishop in the synod of assignment consults with the Office of the Secretary concerning reception of a candidate.
- B. The ELCA receives Word and Sacrament ministers from churches that believe, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian creeds.
- C. Those from traditions that do not confess the above creeds will be ordained according to the Service of Ordination. The Office of the Secretary determines how this policy applies in the case of each candidate.

VI. Pastoral care and support

For those who come to the ELCA from other Christian traditions, the beginning of service as an ELCA pastor is a time to establish significant relationships for support and growth. During the early years of service, the synod bishop may provide a mentor who supports and nurtures the newly rostered pastor.

Chapter 5 - Endorsement

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:1-2, NRSV)

THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

Endorsement – a second major point of discernment in the candidacy process – normally occurs after a candidate has completed a minimum of one third of the academic work required or its equivalent. Whereas entrance focuses on discernment of readiness for candidacy, at endorsement a Candidacy Committee and its seminary partners affirm:

- a candidate's continued discernment of a call to and gifts and skills for a specific rostered ministry, and
- mutual discernment among a Candidacy Committee, seminary faculty and a candidate of his or her readiness to complete candidacy successfully.

At endorsement a Candidacy Committee acts on behalf of the whole church in affirming a candidate's call and gifts for rostered leadership. Both the Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty express support and affirmation of a candidate's continued progress in candidacy leading toward approval (see Chapter 6).

By the time of endorsement, a candidate, a committee and seminary faculty will know each other well enough and have sufficient information to determine whether it is desirable to proceed further. Some practices candidacy committees have found useful for building relationships between the committee and candidates include:

- regular contacts between a candidate and his/her relator or contact person,
- developmental interviews with the committee between entrance, endorsement or approval,
- retreats that include candidates and members of the Candidacy Committee,
- conversations with a seminary faculty adviser, and
- annual updates from candidates to the committee.

If denial or postponement is being considered, endorsement is the most appropriate time for determining that a candidate is not a good fit for service as a rostered leader. Such a decision may be made by a candidate as a result of his or her ongoing discernment, by a Candidacy Committee or by both. In instances where a candidate does not seem well-suited for rostered leadership, making such discernment at endorsement relieves a candidate of taxing finite resources of time, finances and emotional energy. At this point honest feedback and clarity of discernment by a Candidacy Committee can be an expression of deep caring and love for both a candidate and the church. It is appropriate for a candidate and discernment partners to reach mutual agreement that a candidate's gifts and sense of call are better suited for some type of service other than rostered leadership. To arrive at such a decision is not a failure on the part of a candidate, a seminary or a Candidacy Committee. Rather, it is an indication of faithfulness in being open to how God is speaking to a candidate and to the church.

Endorsement is the official action of a Candidacy Committee recognizing and affirming:

- (a) a candidate's readiness to complete the candidacy process, and
- (b) a candidate's demonstration of appropriate gifts and characteristics for a specific roster.

The period between entrance and endorsement will vary in length due to the variety of curricular approaches and timelines utilized by different seminaries and a candidate's own rate of progress. This period is normally a time for theological study, ongoing spiritual formation, personal growth, and continuing discernment and clarification of call. Topics that will be addressed during this period include:

1. a candidate's articulation of God's mission in the world and missional leadership,
2. a candidate's understanding of a call to a specific roster or to some other form of service,
3. personal spiritual growth and faith commitment,
4. educational and theological wisdom, and
5. personal and interpersonal skills.

Some indicators of readiness for endorsement

The suggestions below may assist candidates, candidacy committees and seminary faculty in determining when a candidate might be ready for an endorsement interview:

- Has the candidate successfully completed CPE?
- Has the candidate achieved success and competence in theological study in core areas, such as Bible, theology and the Lutheran Confessions?
- Has the candidate demonstrated competence and leadership in practical areas of the roster for which she or he is preparing?
- Has the candidate gained understanding of the larger church?
- Has the candidate cultivated collegial relationships and accountability?

Leaders seeking a change of roster

Current ELCA rostered leaders who apply for a different roster enter the candidacy process at endorsement. The Candidacy Committee thereafter follows the same procedures outlined in this manual for the remainder of the candidacy process.

ENDORSEMENT INTERVIEW PANEL

The timing of endorsement will be included in the Candidate Accompaniment Plan following entrance (see Appendix D). An endorsement interview panel includes representatives from the Candidacy Committee (e.g., at least a candidate's contact person and another committee member) and faculty from a candidate's seminary (e.g., the faculty adviser, the dean of students, or others who know and work with a candidate). Congregational and Synodical Mission staff may also be asked to participate in endorsement panels.

During the endorsement process, a Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty collaboratively monitor and assess a candidate's progress in formation for rostered leadership and review issues already identified at entrance. Candidates who attend a non-ELCA seminary must affiliate with an ELCA seminary prior to endorsement.

For candidates enrolled at ELCA seminaries, a member of the Candidacy Committee convenes and chairs the endorsement interview panel at a time and location arranged through the seminary. Optimally, the panel meets on the seminary campus in a face-to-face format. Any variance to this procedure will be in consultation with the appropriate Congregational and Synodical Mission candidacy staff person. The panel makes its recommendation to the full

Candidacy Committee, and the latter makes the official decision regarding endorsement.

Endorsement components

Well in advance of the Endorsement panel interview, the Candidacy Committee distributes to each panel member the following confidential items:

- the Entrance Decision Form with noted areas for growth,
- a copy of the endorsement essay (available at www.ELCA.org/Resources/Candidacy),
- a CPE report,
- information on a candidate's participation in seminary community life including Boundary/Safe Church workshops, and
- examples of a candidate's demonstrated competencies (see pages 6 - 10).

Guidelines for an Endorsement Panel Interview

This interview guide for use by endorsement interview panels and Candidacy Committees describes the flow of an endorsement interview. Each synodical or multi-synodical Candidacy Committee may adapt the basic elements of this guide to fit its own style and situational needs. Even so, each endorsement interview panel needs to adhere to a consistent pattern in its approach.

Pre-interview briefing

Prior to the interview panel members review a candidate's file with particular attention to issues identified at entrance, discuss the candidate's endorsement essay and other relevant materials, and share their knowledge of the candidate. The panel identifies in advance primary topics for discussion and may formulate lead questions for each topic.

The endorsement interview

The panel establishes a conversational tone and invites a candidate to engage in dialogue in a spirit of mutual interest, trust and exploration. This is a time for mutual assessment of a candidate's strengths and growth areas in discerning readiness for completing candidacy.

What follows are some possible questions for an endorsement interview.

Competency 1: A rostered leader is rooted in the presence and activity of the triune God.

1. In what ways have you experienced grace in your life? How have you shared that experience with others?
2. Describe your relationship with the triune God?

Competency 2: A rostered leader actively participates in God's mission through the church.

1. What is your theology of mission?

Competency 3: A rostered leader cultivates vision and purpose.

1. What spiritual practices do you regularly use?

Competency 4: A rostered leader demonstrates leadership skills.

1. How do you engage people and lead them toward active participation in God's mission?

Competency 5: A rostered leader engages the way of the cross.

1. How do you understand the relationship between suffering and faith?
2. How do you talk with people about the theology of the cross?
3. In what ways are you grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Competency 6: A rostered leader proclaims the faith.

1. What is your understanding of law and gospel?

Competency 7: A rostered leader leads worship.

1. In what ways do you experience a sense of the Holy while leading worship?

Competency 8: A rostered leader interprets mission.

1. What is the wider mission of the ELCA through its interdependent partners and expressions?
2. What is your personal commitment to the wider church?

Competency 9: A rostered leader cultivates Christian community, discipleship, leadership formation, and the practice of reconciliation of differences.

1. In what ways have you participated and engaged in the seminary community?
2. How central is an understanding of baptismal vocation for Christian community?
3. How do you identify and encourage the gifts of others?

Competency 10: A rostered leader cares for people.

1. What indicators have you received from others that you have sensitivity to the needs of people?

Competency 11: A rostered leader practices wellness in one's personal life.

1. Choose one of the areas of wellbeing on the Wholeness Wheel and describe how you are embodying this in your life.

Competency 12: A rostered leader evangelizes.

1. What experiences have you had sharing your faith with an unchurched person?
2. How do you engage in conversation with people of different or no faith?

Competency 13: A rostered leader relates theology with history, context and culture.

1. Describe how you have adapted to different contexts where you have lived? Which adaptations were most difficult for you?
2. How have you shared your faith with people of a different culture?

Competency 14: A rostered leader equips and sends disciples into the world.

1. What are some ways you live out your Christian faith?
2. What do you understand to be the mission of God in the world?
3. How do you empower others for discipleship?

The panel also needs to ask if a candidate is living and intends to continue to live in a manner consistent with "Vision and Expectations."

Panel reflection and consultation

The endorsement panel discusses a candidate's readiness for endorsement and prepares its recommendation for the Candidacy Committee. When the recommendation is to postpone

endorsement, the panel identifies specific areas needing further development. When the recommendation is to deny endorsement, the panel arranges for appropriate pastoral care.

Panel recommendation

The endorsement panel meets with the candidate and shares its recommendation. The panel clarifies that the final decision concerning endorsement is the responsibility of the Candidacy Committee, which will communicate its decision to the candidate in a timely manner. If the panel's recommendation is to postpone endorsement, the panel and candidate need to clarify goals and requirements for reconsideration of endorsement.

Report preparation

The panel prepares and submits to the Candidacy Committee a final written report with its endorsement recommendation.

Guidelines for endorsement of candidates at non-ELCA seminaries

To avoid unnecessary delays and misunderstanding following entrance, candidates enrolled at non-ELCA seminaries work closely with the Candidacy Committee and the ELCA seminary of affiliation. In preparation for endorsement, affiliate students (those receiving a degree from a non-ELCA seminary but completing an internship and core Lutheran courses through an ELCA seminary) complete a check list (see Appendix E) and submit it with the endorsement essay to the Candidacy Committee. In completing the checklist, the candidate also consults with the seminary dean and/or other appropriate faculty members to formulate a Candidate Accompaniment Plan (see Appendix D).

As a candidate moves through candidacy following entrance, there may need to be adjustments to the Candidate Accompaniment Plan. As the need for such adjustments arises, both the seminary of affiliation and the Candidacy Committee need to share a common understanding of how the candidate intends to meet both academic and candidacy requirements.

The endorsement decision

Based upon the recommendation from an endorsement panel and other relevant information, the full Candidacy Committee may make three possible decisions: **endorsement granted, endorsement postponed or endorsement denied.**

When the decision of a Candidacy Committee differs from an endorsement panel's recommendation, the committee will inform faculty members who served on the endorsement panel of its decision. In all cases, the final responsibility for endorsement rests with the Candidacy Committee.

- **Endorsement granted** reflects a Candidacy Committee's confidence in the candidate's formation and growth. Barring unforeseen difficulties, there is every reason to believe the candidate will complete candidacy. The committee may make recommendations for continued growth and formation and include them in the Endorsement Decision Form.
- **Endorsement postponed** indicates that certain developmental issues must be

addressed and/or specific conditions realized before the candidate can be endorsed. The Endorsement Decision Form should clearly specify any developmental issues and/or conditions that are to be met prior to reconsideration of endorsement. The committee designates who will monitor its recommendations, determine when reconsideration may be scheduled, and delineate the procedures to be followed.

- **Endorsement denied** is a discernment that there are specific reasons why the candidate is not suitable for rostered leadership. A Candidacy Committee must clearly identify its reasons for denial. In properly documenting its decision and the reasons for it, a Candidacy Committee makes certain the candidacy process has been faithfully followed. The committee will offer appropriate pastoral care when communicating its decision to a candidate and arrange for follow-up care, including assistance in identifying and affirming where a candidate's particular gifts for ministry might be a good fit in the church and/or the community.

Reporting endorsement decisions

Using the Endorsement Decision Form, the Candidacy Committee reports its decision to the candidate, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, and the appropriate seminary.

Withdrawal of endorsement

Although endorsement is a strong word of confidence, it does not guarantee the committee's final approval of a candidate. If warranted by written allegations of actions that may prove harmful to the church, a Candidacy Committee has the responsibility, after prayerful deliberation, to withdraw its endorsement prior to approval. A decision to withdraw endorsement is a significant action that ends a candidacy. When withdrawal of endorsement is being considered, a Candidacy Committee will normally communicate with the candidate prior to making such a decision. If the allegations are proved false, the committee may reverse its decision to withdraw and reinstate the candidate in the candidacy process at the point where candidacy was terminated.

Reapplication

A minimum of one year must pass before a person denied endorsement or whose endorsement was withdrawn may reapply for candidacy. A Candidacy Committee must consult with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to determine the appropriate point of re-entry into candidacy.

From endorsement to approval

Endorsement remains in effect until approval. While there is no annual renewal of endorsement, Candidacy Committees maintain regular contact with candidates. Candidacy Committees and the seminary of enrollment (or the seminary of affiliation, in the case of candidates studying at non-ELCA seminaries) share responsibility for monitoring a candidate's continued growth. Accordingly, a Candidacy Committee may provide suggestions to a seminary concerning an appropriate internship setting, as well as other recommendations concerning a candidate's ongoing formation and preparation for rostered leadership. The seminary in turn will provide regular reports to the Candidacy Committee on a candidate's course work, supervised clinical ministry, contextual education, internship and any other pertinent information that might assist the committee.

Internships

The ELCA requires candidates to complete satisfactorily an approved internship, which consists of supervision in a context designed to contribute to the formation of pastoral identity

and the development of competencies for rostered leadership. Because new and diverse seminary models now permit internships to occur at different points in a candidate's formation process, Appendix F offers detailed guidelines for internships that will meet the expectations of the ELCA.

Chapter 6 – Approval

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, NRSV)

Approval process

The final step in the ELCA candidacy process is approval – a significant milestone in a candidate's lifelong journey of discernment. At this stage a Candidacy Committee, the seminary of enrollment (or affiliation), and the candidate are discerning readiness to serve as a rostered leader after successful completion of all academic and candidacy requirements. Such discernment is the culmination of an extensive process that began prior to entrance as a period of preliminary discernment, continued at entrance with a mutual discernment of readiness for candidacy, became more focused at endorsement with a discernment of readiness to complete candidacy, and now reaches a point of mutual affirmation and celebration of readiness for service as a rostered leader. Barring unexpected complications, the climate for approval should normally be confirmation of earlier discernment.

Approval is not a point for directing candidates away from rostered leadership. In an effective and faithful candidacy process, such a determination will normally occur much earlier, preferably at endorsement. Even at approval, however, it is appropriate for a candidate and other discernment partners – a Candidacy Committee, seminary faculty, and others – to reach mutual agreement that a candidate's gifts and sense of call are better suited for some type of service other than rostered leadership. To arrive at such a decision is not a failure on the part of a candidate, a seminary, or a Candidacy Committee. Rather, it is an indication of faithfulness in being open to how God is speaking to a candidate and to the church.

Responsibility for approval of candidates for rostered leadership resides with the Candidacy Committee. The process described in this chapter reflects procedures and guidelines developed by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in regular consultation with candidacy partners.

Granting approval is of major significance, not only for a candidate but also for ministry settings in which a candidate will serve as a rostered leader. In granting approval, the Candidacy Committee is acknowledging on behalf of the ELCA that a person is qualified and suited to serve under call as a rostered leader. This final step in candidacy is a threshold in the sense that when a candidate receives and accepts a letter of call, there will be further public acknowledgment of his or her qualifications for rostered leadership.

Two ELCA documents speak directly to a candidate's qualifications for rostered leadership – the “Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Vision and Expectations.” The first document defines the basic standards candidates must meet for a specific roster. The second document sets forth what the ELCA expects of those who serve in positions of trust and responsibility and states a vision for what rostered leadership can be. At approval, candidates will be asked and must state a clear intention to live and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with “Vision and Expectations.”

1. Approval components

Candidacy Committee members interviewing candidates for approval need to have a candidate's complete file available for review and study. In addition, the material listed below is necessary for approval.

- **The approval essay**
 - a. The approval essay, prepared by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit with the assistance of an appointed writing team, is available to candidates, candidacy committees, and ELCA seminaries on the ELCA website. Because candidates attending non-ELCA seminaries may not have the same awareness of timelines and access to announcements, the Candidacy Committee should give such candidates direct notification about the posting of the essay along with the deadline for submitting it.
 - b. The approval essay provides an opportunity for a candidate to demonstrate readiness for rostered leadership by exercising theological wisdom related to practical situations and ministry tasks. Candidates also prepare a personal reflection on rostered leadership and submit a sermon or project. A candidate is responsible for sending the completed approval essay to the Candidacy Committee by the required date.
- The ELCA Seminary Faculty Recommendation (Form D)
- An internship evaluation
- Academic transcripts
- A final report on CPE or other supervised clinical ministry, especially if completed after endorsement
- The Approval Information Form

The Candidacy Committee may request and review any other materials it deems relevant for discerning a candidate's readiness for rostered leadership.

The approval interview

Approval is a threshold for rostered leadership in the ELCA, not the conclusion of a process. Discernment and formation for rostered leadership are lifelong processes that encompass candidacy, First Call Theological Education, and lifelong learning.

The approval interview is the Candidacy Committee's final meeting with a candidate. In preparation for it, members of the Candidacy Committee read the approval essay, as well as other pertinent material from a candidate's file (see the components listed above), previous decisions of the Candidacy Committee, and Form D. The purpose of the approval interview is to review in depth a candidate's readiness for rostered leadership.

In preparing for the interview, Candidacy Committee members will be mindful of the competencies expected of rostered leaders.

1. Rooted in the presence and activity of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A rostered leader nurtures a vibrant faith and relationship with the triune God within a community of faith and leads other Christians to do likewise as they participate in God's mission. This competency can be assessed as the Candidacy Committee inquires about a candidate's ability to:

- engage in theological and spiritual discernment that manifests a faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
- articulate and live out a clear Christian identity, and

- interpret the Scriptures as the norm for understanding God's mission in the world.

2. Actively participates in God's mission through the church. Some key aspects related to this competency are:

- an ability to cultivate a compelling vision for ministry,
- equipping people to share faith stories,
- skills in hospitality that invite people to a life of discipleship, and
- awareness of the interconnectedness of the church beyond the local congregation.

3. Cultivates vision and purpose. This competency includes:

- the use of spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, biblical and theological reflection, and spiritual direction),
- knowledge of societal and cultural trends that can inform a congregation's vision and sense of purpose,
- skills for leading congregations and other groups in discernment of God's mission in the world (including the incorporation of input from a diversity of sources and people), and
- courage to lead God's people into mission as discerned.

4. Leadership skills. Some critical indicators of this competency are:

- demonstration of adaptive leadership skills that are sensitive to context,
- skills for leading a community of faith through change while addressing conflicts that might emerge,
- a capacity to engage people and lead them toward active participation in God's mission in the world,
- a facility for encouraging collegial decision-making processes in a congregation,
- demonstration of personal holistic stewardship and skill in equipping others, and
- a grasp of how administrative structures and procedures can serve mission in congregational life.

5. Engages the way of the cross. Empowered by the resurrected Christ, a rostered leader shows people the crucified Christ through word and deed and enables them to envision what God is doing in the world and in their lives. Some indicators of this competency include:

- a willingness to confront and engage suffering in the lives of others and in one's own life, especially among marginalized people,
- exhibiting qualities of servant leadership,
- willingness to serve, risk and sacrifice for the sake of God's mission, including an ability to identify and lead in exposing the principalities and powers operative in a given context, and
- responding to life crises as opportunities for experiencing new life.

6. Proclaims the faith. Clear indicators for this competency are the candidate's ability to

- preach the Word as law and gospel,
- teach Scripture,
- share the faith with others,
- provide Christian education for all ages and cultures,
- articulate theological wisdom, and
- live a disciplined spiritual life.

7. Leads worship and administers the Sacraments (Word and Sacrament leaders).

Key aspects of this competency are:

- the ability to plan and lead worship, preach and administer the sacraments,
- adapt the Lutheran liturgical tradition to local contexts, and
- a demonstrated manner of invoking in worship a sense of the Holy and a welcoming spirit with a view toward God's mission in the world.

8. Interprets mission. This competency reflects the ability of a candidate to articulate and interpret in a compelling manner, both theologically and contextually, the wider mission of the

ELCA through its interdependent partners and expressions. This competency also includes a commitment to the mission of the wider church, including synods and the churchwide organization, as well as related institutions and agencies of the ELCA, and facility in interpreting and motivating support for the ELCA beyond the local congregation.

9. Cultivates Christian community, discipleship, leadership formation, and the practice of reconciliation of differences. A rostered leader effectively forms and leads Christian communities that intentionally foster the growth of disciples of Jesus Christ and attend to the formation of leaders in the church. Some indicators of this competence are:

- gifts for forming partnerships and networks,
- the practice of reconciliation and mutual empowerment among diverse groups,
- convening and empowering teams for mission, and
- a sense of stewardship in cultivating gifts manifest in a community of believers and delegating and sharing tasks tailored to those gifts.

10. Cares for people. A ministry of care encompasses both congregational and community care. Some key aspects related to this competency include

- visitation,
- counseling,
- equipping the baptized to provide ministries of care, both within the congregation and in the wider community,
- knowledge of community resources for appropriate referrals and participation, and
- sensitivity to people in major life and cultural transitions.

11. Practices wellness in one's personal life. Some factors to consider in this area:

- a vibrant and resilient faith,
- a balance of work, play and self-care,
- maintenance of clear and healthy boundaries in all relationships,
- attention to diet, exercise and mental/physical health, and
- nurturing healthy family relationships.

12. Evangelizes. A rostered leader actively believes and carries out Christ's command to go out and share the gospel with neighbors. Some key factors related to this competence are:

- a passion and imagination for sharing the gospel,
- a sensitivity and skill for welcoming the stranger into community,
- discovering and implementing creative ways to share the gospel with people outside the church,
- listening to people's stories and assisting them to interpret their experience in light of the gospel,
- valuing Christian community as formative for faith, and
- a natural and authentic gift, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for engaging people in the depths of their lives.

13. Relates theology with history, context and culture. A rostered leader understands and interprets context and culture through the lens of Christian faith and leads a community of faith to opportunities where the gospel can be understood and shared by people in specific cultural contexts. Some critical indicators of this competency include:

- an ability to engage culture and context theologically, critically and creatively with a sensitivity to historical factors,
- analysis of congregational and community demographics and trends,
- engagement with complex social and religious issues as a practical theologian in context,
- sensitivity to cross cultural, intra-cultural and counter-cultural dynamics, and
- skill in addressing cultural differences.

14. Equips and sends disciples into the world. A rostered leader prepares disciples to discern the leading of the Spirit as they share the gospel with neighbors in word and deed. Some important considerations for this competence are

- a demonstrated capacity to mobilize people of faith with different gifts and perspectives that can enrich the church's witness in the world and lead to acts of mercy and justice,
- a personal embodiment of Christian faith in one's daily life,
- a demonstrated capacity for cultivating communities of well-being and holistic stewardship as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel (see pages 30-32),
- a theological sensitivity to the presence and activity of God in the world,
- a recognition of the public vocation of the Christian community in the world, and
- the ability to interpret that vocation to people of faith.

In addition to the above, candidacy committees will want to explore:

- **a candidate's personal integrity** expressed through consistent behaviors, values, methods, principles, expectations and morals, as well as a commitment to live one's life faithfully among the people of God as articulated in "Vision and Expectations,"
- **a candidate's trustworthiness** reflected in a reliable ability to respect confidentiality and inspire confidence by caring for and being respectful of others, and
- **a candidate's call to ministry and ministry gifts**, whereby the committee can confirm to its satisfaction that a candidate possesses the preparation, commitment, character and gifts and abilities expected of those called to rostered leadership.

Guidelines for an approval interview

This interview guide for use by candidacy committees describes the flow of an approval interview. Each Candidacy Committee may adapt the model provided to its particular situation and needs.

Preparation for the interview

A. "Vision and Expectations"

Prior to the approval interview, the Candidacy Committee arranges for each candidate to respond to a series of questions (see below) related to "Vision and Expectations." The latter document articulates the ELCA's vision and expectations for both Word and Sacrament and Word and Service rosters. At approval those expectations deserve consideration and in depth conversation.

In discussing "Vision and Expectations," it can be useful to ask candidates about their understanding of the call to rostered leadership, their faithfulness to the ELCA's Confession of Faith, their view of the importance of living an exemplary life, and their articulation of faith in the church and in the world.

To assist both a committee and a candidate in clarifying his or her knowledge of and commitment to the expectations of the ELCA, the following questions may be asked:

- What does it mean to be properly called and ordained/commissioned or consecrated?
- What is your understanding of the Confession of Faith of the ELCA (Chapter Two of the ELCA Constitution)?
- Do you have any questions or reservations concerning that Confession of Faith?
- What is your understanding of the expectation for rostered leaders to be personal examples and faithful witnesses of holy living?

- In what ways will you as a future ELCA rostered leader support the mission and ministries of the ELCA beyond the local congregation or site where you serve? How important is this to you?
- Are you living and do you intend to continue to live and conduct your life in a manner consistent with “Vision and Expectations”?

B. Approval Information Form

Prior to the approval interview, a candidate will complete an Approval Information Form that includes:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| ___No___Yes | 1. Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions? |
| ___No___Yes | 2. Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical or other improper behavior? |
| ___No___Yes | 3. Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver’s license? |
| ___No___Yes | 4. Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties? |
| ___No___Yes | 5. Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors? |
| ___No___Yes | 6. Have you engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to be a rostered leader? |
| ___No___Yes | 7. Do you have or have you had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA? |
| ___No___Yes | 8. Are there issues in your family situation or personal life that could adversely affect your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA? |
| ___No___Yes | 9. Is your personal debt, excluding mortgages, greater than \$31,500. If your answer is “yes,” be prepared to discuss this matter with the Candidacy Committee. |
| ___No___Yes | 10. Have you ever defaulted on a loan or declared bankruptcy? |
| ___No___Yes | 11. Are you familiar with the document “Vision and Expectations”? |

- ___No___Yes 12. Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
- ___No___Yes 13. Are you prepared to accept a call from this church based on the needs of the church, which might require service in a location different from where you now live?

Following a discussion with the Candidacy Committee about the candidate's responses to these questions, the candidate and at least one member of the Candidacy Committee sign the form and place it in the candidate's permanent file.

C. A candidate's file

Prior to the approval interview, members of the Candidacy Committee review pertinent information from the candidate's file, including the approval essay, internship evaluations, CPE reports and other relevant material.

The approval interview

At approval, the Candidacy Committee has the privilege and responsibility of welcoming candidates, affirming ways in which they have been formed, and having intentional conversation with them about their readiness for rostered leadership. Candidacy Committees utilize a variety of formats for the approval interview, such as panels instead of the entire committee, retreat settings, and separate sections for different foci in the interview. Consideration of the role of a candidate's contact person is part of preparing for the interview.

Understandably, candidates experience considerable anxiety in anticipation of an approval interview. The panel or committee, therefore, will want to clarify the purpose of the interview and establish a tone of hospitality and appreciation with a candidate.

To facilitate and strengthen conversation during the interview, the Candidacy Committee may structure the interview around the components described below.

- **Reflection on leadership (internship).** A Candidacy Committee reviews internship evaluations and faculty recommendations (Form D) for clear instances of behavior and experience in which a candidate has demonstrated the characteristics of a missional leader (see above).
- **The approval essay.** The focus here could be a candidate's theological articulation of the church's understanding of mission and how that relates to God's mission in the world. It is important to have conversation about each section of the approval essay. There may be concerns in one area that require more detailed questioning. It is also important to affirm strengths revealed in the essay.
- **Developmental needs of a candidate.** The committee reviews and discusses with the candidate the following areas:
 - growth areas and developmental needs previously identified at entrance and endorsement,
 - any issues that have surfaced from the discussion of "Vision and Expectations" and the Approval Information Form,
 - identification of focal points for ongoing discernment and First Call Theological Education, and
 - hopes for future ministry settings.

In the approval interview it is critical for the Candidacy Committee to allow sufficient time to address all three of the components outlined above to ensure a comprehensive consideration of vital factors. To that end a committee will want to budget the time and approach used for the interview to maintain a balance among the three components in order not to neglect or short-change any of the components.

One possible strategy for attaining such a balance is for the Candidacy Committee to set up separate panels for each component – internship, approval essay and developmental needs. After the separate panels have met, the entire committee can discuss together what each panel heard and concluded from its segment of the interview. Another model for such a process is an approval retreat utilizing a three-panel format. Candidacy committees should determine how to handle the suggested process for an approval interview and the format that works best for them.

Following the interview, the Candidacy Committee excuses a candidate while it enters into further discernment and discussion. It is difficult to determine in advance exactly how much time might be required. If a committee anticipates a difficult decision regarding a candidate's approval, it is important to allow adequate time for careful deliberation. The goal of such deliberation is for the committee to reach agreement – preferably by consensus – on approval (approval granted, approval postponed or approval denied). Once a committee makes a decision, it informs the candidate of its decision.

Recommendation of candidates by ELCA seminaries

During the final year of candidacy, every candidate studying at or affiliated with an ELCA seminary must receive a recommendation from the faculty of an ELCA seminary (Form D). The ELCA seminary faculty makes an assessment as to whether a candidate is ready to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA.

The faculty interview

In preparing an ELCA seminary faculty recommendation (Form D), some members of the faculty meet personally with a candidate in order to review the program of study and assess readiness for rostered leadership. Usually a candidate's faculty adviser participates in the review. At some seminaries a single interview serves both as an internship debriefing and an approval recommendation. The interview focuses on a candidate's spiritual, vocational, theological, intellectual, professional and personal development. Following the interview, the faculty panel states to the entire faculty whether a candidate meets the basic constitutional standards for rostered leadership in the ELCA, including:

- commitment to and faith in the triune God,
- acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church,
- willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church, including public support for its wider ministries,
- academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships, and
- commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example of faithful service and holy living.

After review and action by the entire faculty, the faculty interview panel or one member of it prepares a written evaluation of the candidate (Form D), gains faculty approval for it, and

submits it to the seminary, the appropriate Candidacy Committee, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

The faculty recommendation does not replace or duplicate the approval interview with a Candidacy Committee. Instead, it offers a critical and essential perspective grounded in a comprehensive engagement with a candidate over a lengthy period of time. The faculty recommendation reflects primarily on a candidate's seminary experience – both academic and practical – with the goal of assessing a candidate's readiness for rostered leadership. The Candidacy Committee, on the other hand, during the approval interview focuses on the approval essay and a candidate's readiness for rostered leadership.

The faculty recommendation

The full faculty of an ELCA seminary will make one of three recommendations concerning a candidate:

- 1. Approval granted**
- 2. Approval postponed**
- 3. Approval denied**

Faculty members who are not well acquainted with a candidate may abstain. The decision should normally be by a two-thirds majority. When the vote is less than two-thirds but still a majority, the outcome should be noted in the report to the Candidacy Committee.

An ELCA seminary faculty and the Candidacy Committee may sometimes come to different conclusions regarding approval of a candidate. In such cases, the Candidacy Committee, after careful deliberation and further consultation with the seminary through the dean, may deny approval to a candidate who has been recommended by an ELCA seminary faculty.

When an ELCA seminary faculty recommends approval denied, the seminary will inform not only the Candidacy Committee but also the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The Candidacy Committee will regard a faculty recommendation for approval denied with the utmost seriousness.

When the Candidacy Committee receives a recommendation from an ELCA seminary faculty for approval postponed or approval denied, it will consult directly with representatives of the appropriate seminary faculty before the approval interview in order to understand the factors informing the faculty recommendation. The Candidacy Committee may also invite a member of the faculty to be present at the approval interview and participate in the committee's deliberations. Expenses for the participation of the faculty member will be the responsibility of the seminary. A representative of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit must also be present at a Candidacy Committee meeting when candidates who have been denied a positive faculty recommendation are being considered for approval.

In instances where there has not been adequate or conclusive consultation between an ELCA seminary faculty, the Candidacy Committee, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, the Candidacy Committee will normally postpone approval until such consultation can occur and any misunderstandings are resolved. After all partners have been included in the discussion of the candidate, the Candidacy Committee makes the final decision regarding approval.

The Faculty Recommendation (Form D)

In completing the faculty recommendation for approval (Form D), an ELCA seminary prepares two sections:

1. A written evaluation of a candidate that must be reviewed and may be amended by the academic dean, the candidate's faculty adviser, and other members of the faculty but must be approved by the whole faculty.
2. The internship evaluation compiled by seminary staff responsible for internship based on evaluations submitted by the intern, the internship supervisor, the internship committee, and the faculty debriefing.

Both reports and the formal recommendation concerning approval are part of the completed report (Form D).

The seminary sends the faculty recommendation (Form D) to both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The faculty may attach additional explanatory comments to assist the Candidacy Committee in the approval decision. In such commentary, the faculty needs to be as explicit and concrete as possible. The faculty, for example, might address specific areas of continuing education and formation that in its opinion need to be identified as focal points for First Call Theological Education. If any new information emerges after the completion of (Form D) that might alter or affect the seminary faculty recommendation, the seminary will share such information with both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Candidates at non-ELCA seminaries

Candidates who attend non-ELCA seminaries are not exempt from the requirement of a recommendation from an ELCA seminary faculty. Such candidates are required to be affiliated with an ELCA seminary and normally spend one year in Lutheran learning and formation through an ELCA seminary. As a result, most candidates will be known well enough by an ELCA seminary faculty for them to make an informed recommendation. In instances where such a relationship has not been established, or where a candidate is not in residence on the campus of an ELCA seminary, it is a candidate's responsibility to meet with an ELCA seminary faculty and provide whatever information the faculty needs to make a meaningful recommendation. Candidates from non-ELCA seminaries may provide additional references from the faculty of the seminary they attended to both the ELCA seminary faculty and the Candidacy Committee.

The approval decision

The ELCA depends on the wisdom and discernment of the Candidacy Committee in determining who will serve as rostered leaders. Such responsibility relies first and foremost upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and calls for the utmost seriousness and humility on the part of those who serve on the Candidacy Committee.

Before an approval interview, the Candidacy Committee receives all required material, including the seminary faculty recommendation (Form D), a final CPE report, a final internship or field experience evaluation, and the approval essay. In the case of fourth-year internships, it is recommended that internship be completed prior to the approval interview. This normally means fourth-year interns participate in the churchwide assignment of candidates later in the final year of candidacy. In some cases, the final internship evaluation may be prepared after a minimum of nine months, following consultation and agreement between the ELCA seminary of enrollment or affiliation and the Candidacy Committee.

At approval, there are three possible decisions the Candidacy Committee may make.

- **Approval granted** confirms readiness for rostered leadership.

- **Approval postponed** indicates certain issues or conditions need to be resolved prior to a candidate's being considered again for approval. In this case, a committee provides clear directions to a candidate concerning specific developmental goals and concerns that need to be addressed and a date when a candidate may return to the committee. A candidate should be encouraged to provide a written response stating his or her understanding of the concerns and how he/she intends to address them.
- **Approval denied** means candidacy is ended. A committee will state clearly in writing its reasons for its discernment. A committee will want to make certain the candidacy process has been faithfully followed and provide appropriate pastoral care with a candidate. Such discernment is also an opportunity for a Candidacy Committee to spend additional time exploring with a candidate appropriate avenues for service and enabling him or her to exit candidacy with a renewed sense of value, giftedness, and possible direction for pursuing and expressing an understanding of vocation.

Reporting approval decisions (Form E)

The Candidacy Committee reports its approval decision using Form E to a candidate, a candidate's ELCA seminary, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Following approval, a candidate remains under the care and guidance of the Candidacy Committee until he or she receives and accepts a call. When a candidate does not receive a call reasonably soon after approval and the completion of academic work, the period of uncertainty and perceived delay may be especially stressful. It is important, therefore, for the Candidacy Committee to continue to support and care for candidates during such times.

Withdrawal of approval

The Candidacy Committee may withdraw approval by action of the full Candidacy Committee at any time prior to a candidate's receipt and acceptance of a letter of call. Such action may be taken when the committee determines a candidate is no longer qualified to serve in rostered leadership. Reasons for such action may be related to:

1. conduct that is inappropriate for the standards and expectations of this church, or
2. a change in a candidate's personal life that disqualifies her or him.

If a candidate has already been assigned to a synod for first call, the Candidacy Committee may act to withdraw approval only after consultation with the bishop of the synod of assignment. The Candidacy Committee taking such action will report its decision to the bishop of the synod of assignment, a candidate's seminary, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Such action ends candidacy.

Reapplication

A minimum of one year must pass before a person who had approval denied or withdrawn may reapply for candidacy. Consultation with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit is required to determine the appropriate point of re-entry into candidacy.

Assignment

The ELCA calls and sends rostered leaders where they are needed in the life of the church and its participation in God's mission in the world. The ELCA is committed to effective, fair and appropriate placement of rostered leaders for mission and ministry; therefore, all approved candidates need to go through the ELCA assignment process before being considered for call.

Following approval, assignment to regions and synods occurs at churchwide assignment consultations arranged by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The assignment of approved candidates is a complex process, dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, which seeks to integrate and correlate the needs of the church with the gifts and situations of candidates. Those who participate in the churchwide assignment consultation engage in prayer and thoughtful conversation when making assignment decisions. Relevant information about assignments is available on the ELCA website in “A Guide to the ELCA Assignment Process.”

Approved candidates submit Form ABR and a Rostered Leader Profile electronically to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit by the published deadline in order to be included in the assignment process. Completed candidate assignment forms are available to all bishops in advance of the churchwide assignment consultation. Some ministry contexts warrant a more immediate response to extraordinary missional needs of the church. At the request of a synodical bishop, an administrative assignment may be made when authorized and approved through a procedure established by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Renewal and re-approval

Renewal (three years)

If an approved candidate has not received and accepted a letter of call within one year after approval, the Candidacy Committee determines whether it will renew approval for that candidate. An interview is not required for such a decision but may be requested by the committee. A renewal, like approval, is effective for one year and may be repeated twice. An approved candidate requests renewal in writing to the Candidacy Committee, who communicates its decision to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Unless reassigned, a candidate remains assigned to the synod of original assignment.

Re-approval

If three years have elapsed without the receipt and acceptance of a letter of call, an approved candidate makes a request for re-approval. The re-approval process normally includes the following components:

- preparation of the current approval essay,
- a Theological Review Panel recommendation (required if more than five years have elapsed since the original approval) from a panel that normally includes faculty from the ELCA seminary where the candidate graduated or affiliated,
- a psychological evaluation, and
- an approval interview.

Re-approval is valid for one year and can be renewed twice. Seeking re-approval includes participating in the churchwide assignment process. If re-approval is granted, the Candidacy Committee submits a new approval form (Form E) electronically to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

The candidate then provides the required information for assignment (see above) in a timely manner according to the schedule for assignment.

Appendix A: Guidelines for discernment

Journey of discernment

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NRSV)

A journey of discernment designed specifically for the ELCA candidacy process focuses on the development of healthy habits and practices during a lifelong process of discernment. Such discernment is not an additional decision point in the candidacy process. Rather, it is a continuum encompassing the entire life span of an applicant – before, during and following candidacy. Consequently, a Candidacy Committee should not expect applicants at entrance to have answers to all the questions that will be addressed during their seminary formation process and their continued discernment of call throughout the candidacy process.

God works in the life of every person. Every Christian has a baptismal call to ongoing discernment of God’s activity in the world, in the church and in one’s life. The primary purpose behind emphasizing a phase of discernment prior to candidacy – normally with a pastor or mentor – is to assist applicants in reflecting upon aspects of their lives that might confirm a call to rostered leadership. Some aspects worthy of consideration include an understanding of baptismal vocation, spirituality and prayer life, critical life experiences, relationship with a community of faith, significant life influences, and family of origin. Such preliminary discernment can help applicants clarify the interrelationship between internal and external dimensions of a call. It can also enable them to articulate some definite insights about what God is calling him or her to consider vocationally. The ultimate outcome of such discernment will be a decision on whether to apply for candidacy. Even if the individual discerns God is calling him or her to another expression of baptismal vocation, this time of discernment will have been a valuable use of the church’s resources.

Once a person begins candidacy, there will be further discernment. At its best, the candidacy process – both through a Candidacy Committee and on a seminary campus – provides a way for people of faith to arrive at a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and the various ways in which God calls a person into ministry, as a rostered leader or as a lay person, both in the church and in the world. The goal of discernment is to walk with a person of faith in such a way that he or she comes to a firm sense of what God is inviting in his or her life. Whatever the final outcome might be, the process will have been faithful to its objective of accompanying people of faith in discernment, if the individual takes ownership of his or her discernment outcome and completes or exits the process with a positive sense that the direction so discerned is a good fit for his or her gifts and interests.

Several theological understandings undergird a journey of discernment.

1. Discernment is an ongoing process that may begin at different points in a person’s life, continues over a lifetime, and is revisited periodically. This is true both for applicants who enter into candidacy and for those who choose to pursue opportunities for service other than rostered leadership in the ELCA.

2. Discernment of readiness for candidacy originates in the context of how the church understands the vocation of every Christian. Some are called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament or to a ministry of Word and Service; however, many Christians are called to other avenues of service that are better suited to their gifts and interests. All paths are valuable and necessary for God's mission through the church in the world.
3. Discernment of readiness for candidacy includes a communal component that is part of belonging to a community of faith. Such discernment is both internal (personal) and external (corporate). Both the internal and external dimensions complement each other.

What follows are suggested ways to structure and guide preliminary discernment with potential applicants for candidacy, along with recommended resources. It is not intended that every model and every resource will be utilized with every individual. The needs of the individual and the circumstances of the individual's context will determine applicable approaches.

Since discernment of call is a continuum and not a step in candidacy, usually a Candidacy Committee will not work directly with individuals during this phase. Instead, this preliminary discernment will normally occur in the individual's current context, e.g. home congregation, campus ministry, or a Lutheran outdoor ministry setting. A person may select a discernment mentor who will assist them during this period. A mentor can be the individual's pastor, a lay leader in the individual's congregation, a campus minister, a camp director, a college or seminary faculty person or a spiritual director.

The characteristics of people who might serve as discernment mentors include the following:

- a. ongoing spiritual growth and maturity in his or her own life,
- b. embodiment of personal holistic stewardship and well-being as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel,
- c. a love for the church,
- d. an ability to listen deeply and actively reflect with others,
- e. an ability and willingness to pray with the individual, both in person and when apart, as a regular practice,
- f. an ability to think critically and ask difficult questions, and
- g. a commitment to a process of discernment with an individual.

Discernment mentors can benefit from a focused orientation and preparation on how to use the discussion guide and other tools provided in this manual. To facilitate the discernment process, a synod may select a discernment team of two or three people who will help identify and train mentors. Synods should be flexible in applying the guidelines for discernment and adapting them to the specifics of the individual's situation in order to honor and respect the particular needs and uniqueness of each person.

1. Call

A Lutheran understanding of call is threefold. There is an internal call, in which an individual senses God's leading to consider rostered leadership. There is also an external call, in which the church discerns, along with the individual, his or her appropriateness for such service. Finally, following completion of candidacy, the call is confirmed by a specific ministry setting in which the individual will serve.

Much of the focus of a preliminary discernment will be on call. In discernment conversations, attention might specifically address:

- one's faith story, especially reflecting on where the individual has experienced God as active,
- understanding of the baptismal call,
- understanding of the wider church and how one's individual call to service is related to and representative of the whole church, and
- exploration of possibilities and preparation for bi-vocational ministry and other leadership needs of the church.

Possible lines of inquiry

1. Share your faith story, especially times when you have been aware of God's call in your life.
2. Who is the triune God in your life?
3. How do you understand your baptism and its connection to your sense of vocation?
4. What is the relationship between your personal sense of call (internal call) and the call of the whole church (external call)?
5. What other vocations have you experienced or considered? How might you envision those in tandem with your anticipated ministry?

Tools and related resources

- Background papers on the theology of vocation and ecclesiology
- Background paper on Call to Word and Sacrament and Call to Word and Service
- Suggested readings for discussion:
Gustav Wingren, "Luther on Vocation"
Timothy Wengert, "Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today" (Fortress, 2008)
William C. Placher, ed. "Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation" (Eerdmans, 2005).
- Spiritual direction. One noteworthy resource for discernment is spiritual direction. Probably the most desirable approach for the discernment described in this manual is personal spiritual direction with a trained practitioner, who is mature in the spiritual life and in a good position to be helpful to an applicant. Spiritual direction can draw from a variety of traditions and approaches, many of which are not specifically Lutheran. In cases where either a seminary or a Candidacy Committee recommends spiritual direction to applicants, it is helpful for the partner who is recommending this to have firsthand knowledge of the expertise and experience of any people recommended for referral. Normally spiritual direction occurs on a frequency mutually determined between the directee and the spiritual director and continues over a period of several months to several years. The focus of conversations in personal spiritual direction is the prayer life and spiritual sensitivity of the person seeking direction in a climate of confidentiality and transparency on the part of both director and directee. Some reliable sources for more information about spiritual direction in general and contact information for locating individuals who offer it are:
 1. The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. <http://shalem.org/>
 2. The Academy for Spiritual Formation. <http://academy.upperroom.org/>
 3. Spiritual Directors International. <http://www.sdiworld.org/>

4. Synod offices and ELCA seminaries are additional sources for identifying people who offer spiritual direction.

2. Current life situation

Many aspects of an individual's life can have an impact on his or her ability to prepare for and serve in rostered leadership. Some topics to discuss during discernment are:

- reflection on one's family situation, how this journey will impact other family members, and gauging support from family,
- realistic assessment of one's financial situation and a plan for paying for seminary education,
- consideration of how one's health may enhance or hinder ministry, and
- the likelihood of geographic relocation for theological education and first call.

Possible lines of inquiry

1. Think concretely and specifically about how a possible call will impact others in your life, such as parents, spouse, children or a significant other. How are you addressing their concerns and needs in relation to your anticipated future life directions?
2. After completing a financial assessment, what do you identify as your financial strengths and challenges? What plans are you developing to cover the costs of further education?
3. What health issues do you need to address to sustain a healthy lifestyle throughout candidacy and ministry?

Tools and related resources

- Health assessment (see on-line candidacy resources)
- A money autobiography, such as one developed by Dr. Marty Stevens at Gettysburg Theological Seminary and published in "How Much is Enough?" (available through Region 9 ELCA, 1003 Richland St., Columbia, SC 29201)
- A financial assessment instrument (<http://elca.org/Resources/Candidacy> (under Candidates tab))
- The Wholeness Wheel (see page 30), which provides a visual overview of all facets of one's life that need to be considered in a time of ongoing discernment.

3. Life experience

No matter what our age, all of us bring past experiences into any new venture. It is important to have an understanding of how our experiences impact us – positively and negatively. Some areas of specific focus might include:

- educational background,
- transferable skills from work and volunteer positions,
- cross-cultural experiences and travel,
- self-awareness of gifts and growing edges, and
- formative experiences and influences.

Possible lines of inquiry

1. How has your educational experience prepared and shaped you for theological education? How has your prior education influenced or informed your sense of call?
2. What skills from previous work or volunteer experiences have prepared you for rostered leadership?
3. What kinds of cross-cultural experiences (such as travel or ethnic immersion) might inform your sense of ministry? In what ways might such experiences make a difference in how you approach ministry and mission?
4. Who or what experiences have had the greatest impact on your life? How have they shaped you spiritually, vocationally and personally?

Tools and related resources

- Spiritual direction (see above)
- Wholeness Wheel (see pages 30-32)
- Suggested reading: Parker Palmer, "Let Your Life Speak"

4. Leadership models

The role of rostered leaders in the life of the church continues to change and develop. Individuals may have limited experience with a variety of leadership models. During the discernment period, it will be important for the individual to explore and reflect upon:

- understanding of the church's need for rostered leadership with a sensitivity to mission,
- various models for leadership, and
- one's own leadership skills and style.

Possible lines of inquiry

1. Who stands out for you as models for ministry? What qualities in these people do you most wish to emulate? Why?
2. What is your understanding of missional leadership? Why is this important for the church in our time? What specific gifts or barriers for missional leadership do you recognize in yourself?
3. What is the relationship between missional leadership and servant leadership in your approach to ministry?

Tools and related resources

- Suggested readings for discussion:
Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, "The Missional Leader"
Leslie Newbigin, "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society"
Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Missional Church in Perspective"
Craig Nesson, "Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation"
2nd edition (Fortress, 2010)
- Marjorie Thompson, "Soul Feast"
- A spiritual gifts inventory, such as the one available on the ELCA website, www.ELCA.org/
- A tool for determining leadership style, such as DISC.

There are a variety of seminary (ELCA and non-ELCA) and other accredited degree programs that prepare people for rostered leadership. Preliminary discernment can be an important time for exploring options and developing a plan for preparation. Some topics for consideration and reflection might include:

- ELCA seminaries that offer a curricular focus that matches your ministry interests,
- resources at each seminary that might enhance your formation as a rostered leader,
- the ethos of various seminaries (Where would you fit?), and
- a realistic plan and timeline for the curricular options under consideration.

Possible lines of inquiry

1. What areas of ministry particularly excite you?
2. What are you seeking in a seminary community?
3. What for you are the deciding factors in your choice of a seminary?
4. What resources are you utilizing to make a decision about where you might attend seminary?
5. What is your anticipated timeline for entering and completing seminary studies?
6. Given your understanding of the church's need for servant leaders with sensitivity to God's mission in the world, what do you consider to be the most important formative elements in your preparation for rostered leadership?

Tools and related resources

- Summary of ELCA seminaries with descriptions of curriculum and context
- Readings in Bible, theology, worship, sacraments, etc.
- List of ELCA coordinators for missional leadership in each region
- Expectations for Lutheran learning and formation (see page 41)
- Philip G. Camp, "Finding Your Way: A Guide to Seminary Life and Beyond"

Appendix B: Guidelines for psychological consultants

1. Qualifications

A psychological consultant is expected to:

- a. be registered as an approved psychological consultant with the director for candidacy,
- b. conduct a psychological evaluation consistent with the theological purposes and goals of the ELCA candidacy process,
- c. be sensitive to issues of race, language, gender, age and ethnicity and use appropriate tools for evaluation,
- d. provide the Candidacy Committee with recommendations regarding an applicant's current psychological/emotional state and specific issues for further attention or conversation,
- e. provide an applicant with an assessment of personal strengths and areas for growth, including a candid evaluation of psychological/emotional health, and
- f. at a minimum use the assessment instruments recommended by the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

2. The interview and assessment

A psychological consultant conducts a comprehensive assessment with an applicant, including testing instruments and a personal interview. The evaluation shall be conducted in keeping with accepted standards for psychological evaluations.

Every assessment should evaluate an applicant's ego strength, self-awareness, self-concept, physical health, family health history, relational systems issues, interpersonal skills, personal and professional priorities/values, emotional intelligence, psychological health, personal qualities (including potential for leadership), as well as any perceived deficiencies that might disqualify or impede a person from beginning candidacy. Clinicians are invited to recommend other psychological and/or vocational instruments that may be especially appropriate for the ELCA candidacy process. They may also use additional assessment tools requested by a Candidacy Committee.

At a minimum, psychological consultants will use the following instruments:

- a. Personality instruments
 - 1) Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2 or the MMPI-2-RF)
 - 2) Another personality assessment of the consultant's choice, such as the California Personality Inventory (revised) Meyer-Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), The Sixteen Personality Factor, Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI), Profiles of Ministry, or any other valid and commonly used instrument
- b. Vocational inventories, such as the Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Inventory (or another valid inventory)
- c. IQ and cognitive functioning assessments, such as the Shipley-Hartford Institute of Living Scale, Concept Mastery Test (Terman), or Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (should be administered only if a psychological consultant doubts

- an applicant's intellectual capacity for graduate-level work)
- d. Culturally sensitive and/or alternative language instruments and professional resources as appropriate, (e.g., the Spanish language version of the MBTI and/or consultation with a culturally sensitive psychologist).

Note: Where major language or cultural barriers exist, the Candidacy Committee may contact the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for further guidance and assistance.

Because a psychological evaluation is critically important for both an applicant and the Candidacy Committee, an applicant should not be rushed during the testing and interview process. As noted earlier, it is especially important that a psychological consultant explain fully the evaluation results that will be summarized in a written report, especially any areas for further growth or development.

After sharing the results of an evaluation with an applicant, a psychological consultant provides a written summary and secures an informed written release of information for both the Candidacy Committee and the ELCA seminary where the applicant has applied for admission. The report will then be sent to the Candidacy Committee for use in the entrance decision and to the ELCA seminary named on the release of information form. The report becomes part of the confidential candidacy files maintained by the seminary and by the Candidacy Committee. An additional written release of information from an applicant should be obtained before the report can be shared beyond the Candidacy Committee and the seminary of admission.

A psychological consultant may make recommendations for counseling, treatment or other services. Such recommendations should be thoroughly and sensitively discussed with an applicant during the evaluation feedback session. The Candidacy Committee has the responsibility to decide whether the recommended counseling/therapy should be completed prior to granting entrance. If a Candidacy Committee recommends counseling/therapy, it should **not** be with the consultant who provided the evaluation.

3. Reporting to a Candidacy Committee

In the summary report the psychological consultant provides the following information:

- a. personal identity/level of self-awareness and self-concept
- b. quality of past and present family relationships
- c. sense of vision or imaginative ability
- d. intellectual capacity
- e. integrity
- f. emotional maturity and coping ability/durability
- g. motivation for religious service
- h. empathy and affective expression
- i. interpersonal relationship skills
- j. any history of misconduct related to employment
- k. any history of deviant and pathological maladaptation
- l. any history of medical and psychiatric illness
- m. any history of substance abuse or addictions
- n. flexibility

- o. leadership style
- p. assets and liabilities relating to leadership roles in the ELCA, as described in the documents of this church provided to the psychological consultant
- q. personal and professional values/priorities.

Appendix C: Initial interview report form

Synod: _____

Name of applicant: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Interviewer's name: _____

Interview date: _____

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE APPLICANT

- Manner
- Self-expression
- Responsiveness
- Overall appearance
- First impressions

WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Relevance of work or volunteer experience
- Sufficiency of work or volunteer experience
- Leadership experience
- Skills and competencies that can be useful in rostered leadership
- Adaptability
- Productivity
- Initiative
- Follow-through
- Interpersonal relationships
- Growth/development

EDUCATION

- Scope and relevance
- Courses completed
- Leadership
- Discernible patterns in learning style
- Intellectual abilities
- Self-discipline

- Motivation, interests

EARLY YEARS AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

- Family of origin dynamics
- Socio-economic status
- Parental examples
- Basic values (attitudes toward people, achievement, work ethic, service)
- Self-image
- Influential developments or significant family events (e.g. divorce of parents, death of a parent, death of a sibling, etc.)

CURRENT LIFE SITUATION

- Significant relationships
- Diversity of interests
- Situational factors
- Economic situation
- Marital/family situation

FAITH FORMATION AND CALL TO MINISTRY

- Journey of discernment
- Faith formation and discipleship
- Family attitudes
- Involvement in congregational life
- “Vision and Expectations”
- External indicators of call

APPLICANT’S SELF-AWARENESS

- Identified personal strengths
- Identified growth areas

INTERVIEWER’S SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix D: Candidate accompaniment plan

Candidate's name: _____

Contact information:

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Synod of candidacy: _____

Date of entrance decision: _____

Candidacy Committee relator: _____

Seminary where enrolled: _____

Seminary program/track: _____

Seminary adviser: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Anticipated timeline of candidate's seminary program:

Anticipated CPE site/program and dates/duration:

Anticipated contextual learning and/or field experience site/program:

Contextual learning and/or field experience supervisor(s):

Mailing address: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____

Anticipated timing of candidate's endorsement and approval interviews:

Endorsement:

Approval:

Section for candidates attending a non-ELCA seminary

ELCA seminary of affiliation _____

ELCA faculty adviser _____ email _____

Outline below your plan for fulfilling Lutheran learning and formation requirements.

Appendix E: Pre-endorsement checklist for candidates at non-ELCA seminaries

Student: _____

Seminary of attendance: _____

ELCA seminary of affiliation*: _____

Degree: _____ From (seminary) _____

ACADEMIC PLAN:

1. What are your plans for completing your seminary degree requirements? When do you expect to graduate?

2. How are you progressing with your plans and timeline for completing the Lutheran learning and formation requirement?

3. How has your identity as a Lutheran Christian been strengthened or challenged as you have studied at a non-ELCA seminary? In what ways has it been a blessing?

5. Have you completed your CPE requirement? _____
- a. Date of completion _____
 - b. Place _____
 - c. Supervisor _____
 - d. Was a copy of the supervisors report sent to your Candidacy Committee? _____
 - e. Date sent _____
6. When do you plan to do internship?

Candidate signature

ELCA seminary representative

Synod candidacy representative

Appendix F: Guidelines for internship

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has established standards and guidelines for internship for candidates for Word and Sacrament ministry. Each seminary, in turn, creates policies and procedures for implementing those standards.

1. An ELCA seminary, in consultation with the synodical bishop where the site is located and the appropriate Candidacy Committee, approves internship sites.
2. An approved internship will consist of a minimum of 2,000 documented contact hours, or one year, in an approved site.
3. An internship supervisor will meet with an intern on a regular basis and document the meetings. An internship supervisor may be on-site or off-site.
4. An internship committee selected from members of the ministry site will meet regularly with the intern during the internship.
5. An intern will have opportunities to experience the full scope of pastoral duties, including worship leadership, regular preaching, teaching the faith, relationships across the spectrum of ages, pastoral visitation, administration, and, as much as possible, participation in significant life events like baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals.
6. Both the supervisor and the internship committee will submit regular reports to the seminary and the synod Candidacy Committee.
7. The internship site and the seminary will agree upon remuneration for the intern, including housing and health coverage.

Responsibilities of ELCA seminaries

1. Provide adequate policies, procedures, resources, support and faculty staffing to maintain an internship program consistent with the expectations of the ELCA.
2. Place eligible students on internship in accordance with the expectations of the ELCA and the policies and procedures of the seminary.
3. Distribute seminary policies and procedures concerning internships.
4. Maintain effective communication with synodical bishops concerning settings and supervisors and with synodical Candidacy Committees regarding internship candidates prior to placement.
5. In partnership with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, provide common programs to orient and train new supervisors and further the development of experienced supervisors.
6. Maintain effective processes for placement and orientation prior to internship, as well as reflection following internship.
7. Receive and review written supervisor's reports at least twice during an internship.
8. Confer with synodical Candidacy Committees as necessary and provide summary evaluations (Form D) at the conclusion of internships prior to approval interviews.
9. Provide guidance and support during the internship in a variety of ways, including site visits.
10. When necessary, terminate an internship after appropriate consultation.

Responsibilities of synods

The synodical bishop (or designee) shall

1. identify and encourage congregations and pastors to consider applying for an internship through an ELCA seminary,
2. maintain effective communication with seminary field education offices relative to settings and potential supervisors,
3. provide opportunities for ELCA interns in the territory of the synod to participate in the programs and functions of the ELCA and the synod, and
4. offer necessary support for the Horizon Internship program, including adequate synodical funding.

The Candidacy Committee shall

1. advise candidates at non-ELCA seminaries to affiliate with an ELCA seminary during the first year of their academic program in order to meet prerequisites for an eventual ELCA internship,
2. at endorsement convey any recommendations regarding internship, including international Horizon or specialized ministry sites, to candidates and the appropriate internship directors by means of the Endorsement Decision Form, and
3. receive written evaluations regarding candidates' internship experiences prior to approval interviews.

Interns

Interns are candidates who are enrolled in or affiliated with an ELCA seminary and approved for internship placement by that seminary in consultation with the Candidacy Committee to serve in a sustained supervised ministry experience.

To assist seminaries in internship placement, candidates will consult with the appropriate Candidacy Committee and the seminary internship director. Interns will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the policies and practices of the ELCA.

Criteria and standards for candidates for internship

1. Apply for internship through the internship office of the appropriate ELCA seminary or, if attending a non- ELCA seminary, through the ELCA seminary of affiliation.
2. In consultation with the Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty, develop broad learning goals for the internship to be used in considering placement.
3. Once placement has been made, develop specific and agreed upon learning goals with the supervisor and internship committee.
4. Develop and maintain sound and effective relationships with the supervisor, other staff, the internship committee, and members of the congregation.
7. Maintain appropriate contacts with the synodical bishop, the Candidacy Committee, and the seminary. While on internship, interns submit reports and evaluations as requested in a timely manner.
8. Engage in personal prayer, study and theological reflection/discussion on issues related to ministry and be accountable to-a spiritual director or the internship supervisor.
9. Attend internship cluster meetings, conference meetings, and synodical events and

- participate in appropriate community groups and activities.
10. Become familiar with ELCA and seminary policies, programs and curricula, including official ELCA documents and statements.
 11. Inform the seminary internship director in a timely manner of any concerns or difficulties that develop during the internship.

Supervisors

A supervisor is normally an ordained ELCA pastor who has served a minimum of three years in a parish and at least one year in the internship setting. Supervising pastors serve as effective models and guides for interns with regard to faith, spiritual discipline, personal habits, public ministry and participation in the wider church. They provide opportunities for interns to participate in all dimensions of pastoral ministry with oversight and reflective feedback. All supervisors participate in training provided by ELCA seminaries.

Supervisors are expected to be committed to internship as an educational component in the preparation of candidates for Word and Sacrament ministry. Each ELCA seminary, in consultation with the synodical bishop and field education colleagues, approves pastors to serve as internship supervisors.

Criteria and standards for supervisors

1. Share with and appropriately involve an intern in all aspects of parish ministry.
2. Collaborate and share accountability with an intern to achieve mutually agreed upon learning goals.
3. Through weekly supervisory sessions, reflect with the intern on pastoral ministry and the intern's work and well-being.
4. Guide an intern in developing responsible and effective partnership in ministry with laity.
5. Know and support the polity, policies, and positions of the ELCA, including sacramental practices.
6. Participate in the life of the synod and provide opportunities for an intern to experience and participate in synodical programs and events, as well as in appropriate local ecumenical, interfaith, and community organizations and activities.
7. Participate in continuing education.
8. Support the internship committee and facilitate its functioning (but not a member of the committee).
9. Regularly attend internship cluster meetings.
10. Cooperate with the seminary regarding policies and practices contained in its internship manual.
11. Provide written evaluative reports to the seminary at least twice during the internship that includes perspectives on discerning growth and progress, as well as pertinent concerns, in an intern's ministry.
12. Participate in the placement process as requested by the seminary.

Settings

Settings provide opportunities for interns to be broadly engaged in appropriate ministry practices, including occasions unique to each setting. Such opportunities are an expression of the

setting's commitment to internship as an educational component in the candidate's preparation and formation for rostered leadership in the ELCA.

Criteria and standards for internship settings

1. Internship settings are normally open to any ELCA candidate.
2. After consultation with the synodical bishop, an ELCA seminary chooses and periodically evaluates each internship setting.
3. Normally internship sites are congregations.
4. There need to be written policies for sexual ethics, sick leave and lifelong learning.
5. Sites apply for internship to only one ELCA seminary.
6. Sites ensure that the necessary resources (e.g. financial, supervisory, etc.) are available.
7. Sites are committed to internship as an educational component in the preparation of candidates for Word and Sacrament ministry.
8. Sites provide opportunities for an intern to be broadly engaged in appropriate ministerial activities.
9. Sites provide adequate support to an intern (and family), including forming a committee of lay members to provide both the intern and the supervisor with feedback and evaluation.
10. In accord with ELCA policies, interns do not preside at baptisms, except in an emergency; nor will an intern preside at the Eucharist without authorization from the synodical bishop, and then only in extraordinary circumstances.
11. An internship site models awareness of and connectedness with the ELCA as a whole with ongoing supportive relationships, including but not limited to mission support.

Appendix G: Candidacy guidelines for Word and Service rosters

ELCA candidates preparing for Word and Service rosters as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers will follow the standards and academic requirements outlined for each roster in this appendix. A task force appointed by the ELCA Church Council will bring a recommendation to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly for the unification of the three existing Word and Service rosters. If approved by the assembly, new standards and academic requirements for the unified Word and Service roster will be assigned to the candidacy team in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Associate in ministry

Associates in ministry are lay people who are called to serve in an officially recognized Word and Service roster in the ELCA. They work in partnership with other laity, pastors, bishops, diaconal ministers and deaconesses to serve mission and ministry needs through ELCA congregations, agencies or institutions. Associates in ministry provide leadership and support for the people of God as they care for, nurture and equip them for faith and discipleship.

Associates in ministry candidates, guided by a Candidacy Committee, prepare for service through a formal course of study that includes theological education. Once approved, they are eligible for call and serve under a letter of call issued by a congregation, a synod council or the ELCA Church Council. Having accepted a first call, associates in ministry are received onto the roster of the ELCA through a Service of Commissioning. An approved and commissioned associate in ministry has met all ELCA standards for service and enters into a relationship of mutual accountability with the calling body and the synodical and churchwide expressions of this church as set forth in the “Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA” (ELCA 7.50 ff).

Steps in candidacy

Individuals seeking to serve as associates in ministry are expected to participate fully in all steps of the candidacy process: entrance, endorsement and approval.

Entrance begins a process of discernment that explores an individual’s potential for rostered leadership and readiness to begin a process of theological study and candidacy. One year of active membership in an ELCA congregation is a prerequisite for entrance. The entrance process includes the Candidacy Application Form, the Entrance Information Form, the Congregational Registration Form, an initial interview (optional), a background check, a psychological evaluation, and an entrance interview. A candidate must be granted entrance in order to continue in the process of preparation and formation.

Endorsement encourages those who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for a specific roster and identifies areas for growth and development. A candidate prepares an endorsement essay and participates in an endorsement interview. The Candidacy Committee identifies an

appropriate time for endorsement in consultation with the candidate. Typical timing would be the mid-point of the candidacy process. For candidates attending an ELCA seminary, the faculty adviser is included in the endorsement interview.

Because candidates attending a non-ELCA seminary may not have the same awareness of time lines, the Candidacy Committee should give such candidates direct notification about the timing of the endorsement interview and the deadline for submitting the essay.

Candidates who have already completed the majority of the educational requirements prior to application and who are granted entrance may be exempt from endorsement by decision of the Candidacy Committee.

Approval occurs when a candidate articulates a call to ministry and demonstrates readiness to assume a rostered leadership role in the ELCA. The approval interview is scheduled near the completion of all academic and practical criteria. If a candidate is studying at an ELCA seminary, a faculty recommendation (Form D) is required. A candidate prepares an approval essay and participates in the approval interview with the Candidacy Committee. Once a Candidacy Committee grants approval, a candidate participates in the churchwide assignment process and is available for commissioning and first call.

Standards

Candidates approved, commissioned and rostered as associates in ministry shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following basic standards established in the “Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (ELCA 7.52.11):

- commitment to Christ,
- acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of the ELCA,
- willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of the church,
- academic and practical qualifications for the position, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships,
- commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and to be an example of faithful service and holy living,
- receipt and acceptance of a letter of call, and
- membership in an ELCA congregation.

The ELCA expects associate in ministry candidates to demonstrate:

1. knowledge of the Bible, church history, the history and doctrinal teachings of the Lutheran church, and the organization and operating principles of the ELCA,
2. an ability to articulate one’s calling as a baptized Christian and as an associate in ministry,
3. willingness to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry and to assist others in proclaiming God’s love through word and deed,
4. encouragement of people to discern a capacity for and calling to rostered leadership,
5. an ability to work in partnership to serve the mission and ministry needs of the church,

6. a healthy self-awareness and willingness to engage in regular habits for physical fitness,
7. commitment to living in accordance with “Vision and Expectations for Word and Service Rosters in the ELCA,”
8. competence in the area of one’s specialization, and
9. at least one year of satisfactory relationship with a Candidacy Committee.

Academic and practical criteria

In preparation to become an associate in ministry, a candidate engages in a comprehensive program of preparation, including a bachelor’s degree, foundational theological education, field experience and spiritual formation.

Degree requirement

A bachelor’s degree or a graduate degree in a field appropriate to a specialization is required. If the degree is in an unrelated field of study, significant work or competency in the area of specialization must be demonstrated. In some cases a person not holding a bachelor’s degree may be considered for candidacy under the provisions described in “Waiver of academic requirement” (see p. 92).

Theological education

Foundational coursework in theological education shall include a minimum of 20 semester credit hours (or an equivalent), including at least one course in each of the following areas:

1. Biblical studies – Old Testament
2. Biblical studies – New Testament
3. Lutheran theology and confessional writings
4. Introductory systematic theology
5. Lutheran church history (including the North American context).

Additional courses may include practical theology appropriate to a specialization (e.g., religious education, pastoral care and counseling, youth ministry, worship, hymnody, etc.) but should not replace foundational courses.

All theological education will be completed through courses taken at an accredited college or seminary approved by the Candidacy Committee or through a course of study approved by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, including courses through an ELCA program such as Fisher’s Net/SELECT (see page 91). The basic theological education requirement shall not be met by equivalency or through continuing education courses.

Spiritual and vocational formation

All associate in ministry candidates follow a regular pattern of worship, prayer, Bible study and disciplined faith practices while participating in theological education and contextual learning. While formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate engages in practices that are communal in scope, draw on well-established traditions of the church, and model Christian living for others.

At entrance a candidate will be asked to share a plan for how his or her faith life will be sustained

and nurtured during the candidacy process. Such a plan may include spiritual direction, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in corporate worship. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment and healthy self-care will also be discussed.

Throughout the candidacy process, the Candidacy Committee inquires about a candidate's ongoing practices and habits and offers encouragement for lively engagement with various facets of Christian living.

Health and wellness

The ELCA envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving as rostered leaders, as well as their spouses and families, are encouraged, supported and motivated to grow in spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, financial and vocational health and well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance their own lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of public ministry candidates need to demonstrate and develop healthy leadership qualities. Candidates are expected to address any health concerns with the Candidacy Committee. Candidates who practice self-care and attend to all aspects of their health enhance the church's faithful witness in the world. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be most effective when supported by families, congregations, synods, seminaries and communities.

Specialization

The ELCA needs a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings where rostered leaders serve. While forms of ministry may differ, there are common areas of specialization, focus and need. In the candidacy process, an associate in ministry candidate focuses on at least one area of specialization. The list below identifies categories of competency that are indicative descriptive of a variety of areas in which an associate in ministry might develop expertise.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Administration | Music and worship |
| Campus ministry | Outdoor ministry/camping |
| Chaplaincy | Parish nurse/health |
| Christian education | Public policy/advocacy |
| Community organizing | Senior ministries |
| Counseling/social work | Spiritual formation/direction |
| Early childhood administration | teaching |
| Evangelism/mission | Volunteer coordination |
| Interim ministry | Worship leadership/preaching |
| Ministry in daily life | Youth and family |

Candidates are certified, trained or otherwise deemed competent in a particular specialization with appropriate education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through one of the following:

1. an undergraduate degree in a specialization, a major/concentration with a particular focus

- on a specialization, or equivalent academic credentials, or
2. professional licensure or certification, whenever required, or, in exceptional cases, significant recognized work experience in a specialization.

At endorsement, a candidate declares an area of specialization, which the Candidacy Committee reviews and confirms. While a minimum of one area of specialization is expected, a candidate may be called to serve in a position with a broader position description. For those seeking professional certification in chaplaincy, counseling and clinical education, ecclesiastical endorsement is expected. Such endorsement is coordinated through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit following approval near the time of assignment and first call.

The Candidacy Committee is responsible for evaluating a candidate's readiness to serve as an associate in ministry. The committee considers formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education and overall readiness in assessing competence for rostered leadership.

Supervised field experience

A candidate may satisfactorily complete supervised field experience with a specialization through an internship, a practicum, employment or some other arrangement approved by the Candidacy Committee. The normal duration for supervised field experience is one year with a minimum of 600 supervised hours. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) may be included as appropriate (see Guidelines for field experience).

Commissioning and first call

Upon successful completion of all requirements and compliance with "Vision and Expectations," the Candidacy Committee may grant approval to a candidate. Following approval, a candidate participates in the churchwide assignment process. Once an approved candidate receives and accepts a call, the bishop of the synod of assignment arranges for and conducts a service of commissioning.

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is explained in Chapter 1 (Page 20).

Fisher's Net/Select Courses

Fisher's Net/Select courses, produced under the direction of the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, are approved for use by associate in ministry candidates in fulfilling course requirements. They do not qualify for academic credit. Fisher's Net/Select provides courses via video and print. With a Candidacy Committee's approval, a candidate preparing for service as an associate in ministry who is unable to attend a seminary or college may complete some of the course requirements through Fisher's Net/Select. The Candidacy Committee, in conversation with a candidate, determines which courses may satisfy course requirements for an associate in ministry. Normally, courses are offered locally and involve a small cohort of people who have signed up for them. To explore Fisher's Net/Select options, go to: <http://www.selectlearning.org/>.

Fisher's Net/Select will issue a certificate of completion to those who successfully complete a course. The process for receiving a certificate of completion through Fisher's Net/Select is as follows:

1. A candidate arranges to take a course with other students (these may be other associates in ministry, candidates, pastors or laypersons).
2. At the conclusion of a course, a candidate prepares a reflection paper (10 to 12 pages). Instructions for preparing papers are given in the Fisher's Net/Select catalog.
3. The paper will be evaluated in one of the following ways:
 - a. The Candidacy Committee may designate a person to read and approve the paper. The reader need not be a member of the committee but should be qualified to provide theological and biblical critique. After approving the paper, the reader notifies the Fisher's Net/Select office to indicate the candidate has successfully completed the course and request the issuance of a certificate of completion.
 - b. The student may send the paper directly to the director of Fisher's Net/Select, who will read and approve it. If the essay is approved, a certificate of completion will be issued. Fisher's Net/Select charges a nominal fee for reading each paper.

Waiver of academic requirements

Candidates seeking to serve as an associate in ministry who have not completed a bachelor's degree may in some cases request a waiver of the degree requirement. A waiver is reserved for candidates who for reasons of prior experience and/or personal circumstances may not find it appropriate or possible to complete a bachelor's degree. Prior experience in a specialization is a primary criterion for consideration of a waiver, not the age of a candidate. A minimum of an associate degree or significant post-secondary education is expected for consideration of a waiver.

Entrance is required for consideration of a waiver. After receiving a recommendation from a Candidacy Committee, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit reviews and evaluates requests for waivers. Consideration of a waiver includes evaluation of non-degree studies, demonstrated work experience comparable to that expected of a person holding a bachelor's degree and other information. This provision for equivalency applies only to the bachelor's degree requirement and is not applicable to the specific course requirements for an associate in ministry.

The following procedure is for candidates requesting consideration of a waiver.

1. The candidate completes all entrance requirements and is granted entrance by the Candidacy Committee.
2. The candidate submits a written request and rationale to the Candidacy Committee, which reviews the request and determines whether the candidate should proceed under this provision.
3. The Candidacy Committee requests a review by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Such a request includes:
 - a) a letter from the Candidacy Committee that includes the action of the committee to forward the request, a rationale for the request, and confirmation of granting entrance,
 - b) a copy of the Candidacy Application Form, including the entrance essay,

- c) a copy of a written rationale from the candidate that clearly states the reasons for the equivalency request, based on experience, training and competency,
 - d) a detailed listing of the candidate's work experience:
 - i) the employing organization(s), city, position(s), years in the position(s),
 - ii) a description of the range of responsibilities in each position,
 - iii) on-the-job training, seminars and continuing education taken to build and contribute to competencies, including the type and length of training,
 - iv) supervisory and project management roles carried out in each position, including the number of people and the range of tasks for those supervised,
 - v) descriptions of independent or team work experiences,
 - vi) descriptions of relevant volunteer experience and training that can demonstrate equivalency skills, interpersonal skills and organizational skills with a description of the organization, responsibilities, numbers and types of relationships with those reported to and those coordinated, and the length of time served,
 - e) a detailed listing of all education completed, including related continuing education, with available transcripts or certificates, including college, community college, business or trade school, military training and service, on-the-job training, significant work-related seminars and courses (particularly those that led to increased responsibilities and/or a new position),
 - f) a current position description (if employed by a church or church-related institution), and
 - g) three letters of recommendation from people well acquainted with the candidate's background and work, (such as the candidate's pastor, a congregational leader familiar with the candidate's demonstrated leadership abilities and gifts for ministry, and a person with competence and knowledge consistent with the candidate's area of specialization).
4. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit reviews the request and grants the waiver in a letter to the Candidacy Committee with a copy to the candidate.
 5. Following the granting of a waiver, the Candidacy Committee oversees a designated course of study to complete course requirements and an appropriate supervised field experience.

Field experience

Supervised field experience is essential to preparation for service as an associate in ministry, whereby the practice of ministry is combined with supervised reflection and evaluation. Supervised field experience seeks to integrate academic study in an area of specialization and other required course work with the practice of ministry. It also fosters the development of ministerial identity.

Supervised field experience may begin once a candidate has been granted endorsement and may take place during a period of academic study or following the completion of all required course work. A field experience proposal may be prepared prior to endorsement in consultation with the Candidacy Committee. The committee works with the candidate to arrange and oversee field experience for candidates who have completed their academic work and for those already in service.

1. Objectives

- a. To provide actual experience in a candidate's area of specialization, thereby enabling a candidate to develop increasing competence as a rostered leader.
- b. To offer an opportunity for self-evaluation and spiritual nurture under the guidance of a mentor.
- c. To offer an opportunity for evaluation by others, including the mentor, the onsite field supervisor, and an advisory committee from the congregation or group being served.
- d. To provide a learning context that allows a candidate to experience many aspects of congregational, institutional, or agency life, including participation in the governing and programmatic structures such as council, board of directors, committees and staff meetings.
- e. To provide opportunity for a candidate to participate in at least one project in an area of specialization from beginning to completion, including planning, implementation and evaluation.
- f. To assist a candidate in developing regular habits and patterns for theological reflection, spiritual formation and healthy self-care.
- g. To provide the Candidacy Committee with an assessment regarding a candidate's growth, professional development and skills in an area of specialization.

2. Options for field experience

Associate in ministry candidates enter the candidacy process from a variety of contexts. Some are undergraduates, some are enrolled in seminary, and some are already serving in a ministry setting. Some candidates have years of service in the church either as volunteers or paid staff, while others have no work experience.

In recognition of such diversity, candidacy committees, colleges and seminaries need to exercise creativity and flexibility in approving or arranging field experiences appropriate for the particular needs of a candidate. The normal duration of a supervised field experience is one year, which may be interpreted as 6-12 months with a minimum of 600 contracted supervised hours.

3. Candidates enrolled in academic degree programs

Academic institutions may provide field experience such as:

1. a full-time internship for 6-12 months,
2. a combined CPE and field experience arrangement,
3. a part-time position (10-20 hours per week) while a candidate completes required course work during the academic year over a one-or two-year period,
4. part-time work or practicum during the school year combined with a full-time summer position, or
5. an approved student-teaching assignment for Christian day school teachers.

The determination of a structure for field experience will be based on such factors as age, previous work experience, academic setting, graduate or undergraduate status, etc. Candidates may receive a stipend for their field work (strongly encouraged for work exceeding 15 hours per week). Such remuneration should be similar to that granted Master of Divinity interns. Where structured field experience is part of the academic preparation arranged by a college or seminary, a candidate needs to arrange to have evaluation reports sent to the Candidacy Committee.

B. Candidates who have completed academic work

In consultation with a candidate, the Candidacy Committee arranges for field experience and receives evaluations.

If not already employed in a church-related setting, a candidate works with the Candidacy Committee in arranging an appropriate field experience that includes an appropriate stipend whenever possible. Consultation with the bishop is helpful in identifying a location where ministry and supervision needs might be met.

If already employed in a church-related setting, a candidate may, with the approval of the Candidacy Committee, arrange supervised field experience in the place of employment. This option requires assisting both a candidate and a congregation or agency to address the implications and dynamics of a significant role change for an established employee who is in the process of becoming a called and commissioned associate in ministry.

C. Candidates with three or more consecutive years of experience in a church-related work position

The Candidacy Committee may consider a waiver or partial waiver of supervised field experience for candidates who have been serving in church-related employment three consecutive years or longer. Such candidates may submit a written request and rationale for a waiver or partial waiver and document how the goals and objectives for supervised field experience have already been met. Candidates shall also provide three letters of recommendation from people well acquainted with their work. In a congregational setting, references might come from the pastor, a congregational leader either elected or with leadership responsibility related to the area of specialization, or a person with competence and knowledge consistent with a candidate's area of ministry.

The Candidacy Committee reviews this material and in consultation with the candidate and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit determines whether additional contextual learning goals need to be addressed. The Candidacy Committee makes the decision to grant or deny the request.

In all such cases, candidates work with their congregational leadership support committee, if currently in a position of employment, or with the Candidacy Committee if seeking a position, in reflecting together on issues of changing ministry identity as they move from the role of established leader to that of an associate in ministry.

4. Components of the field experience

A. Context

The context should be a setting that represents the anticipated focus of a candidate's future ministry: parish work, parish education, youth ministry, music, etc. If the focus is an administrative or teaching position, a Lutheran elementary, high school or early childhood education center will be the context. If the focus is counseling or specialized pastoral care, it will be with an appropriate agency or institution and include at least one

unit of CPE. Highly specialized settings are approved only when a candidate demonstrates significant experience in a general ministry setting.

B. Supervising/mentoring/advising

A quality field experience for associate in ministry candidates requires over-all on-site supervision, mentoring and training specific to the area of specialization, support and nurture.

Associates in ministry typically serve in multiple-staff ministries and work with a supervisor. Normally, the supervisor is theologically trained and responsible for general oversight in the local situation. Supervised field experience needs to provide training and attend to team-ministry development, as well as the development of individual leadership gifts and skills.

Three critically important roles have been identified for completing the goals and objectives for supervised field experience. Normally, this means the involvement of three parties besides the candidate. In some situations, the roles of field supervisor and mentor can be fulfilled by the same person.

1. **The on-site field supervisor** provides administrative structure to the field experience, including a written description of responsibilities, consultation for mutual reflection about supervisory issues and periodic evaluations. The on-site field supervisor must be an ELCA rostered leader. When the supervisor is an associate in ministry or diaconal minister, that person will include the pastor in the process.
2. **The mentor** is a person from the same area of specialization as a candidate. The mentor shall have at least three years of experience in a candidate's area of specialization. If not on site, the mentor will be identified by the Candidacy Committee or an academic institution in consultation with a candidate. A mentor should be available for at least monthly meetings with a candidate.

The mentor is responsible for working with a candidate in identifying learning goals, objectives and activities specific to the area of specialization. The mentor reflects with a candidate on issues related to effective ministry, as well as patterns for spiritual formation and healthy self-care. Hopefully, the mentor can model a relationship that can continue once a candidate has been approved.

3. **An Advisory Committee** should include people who have regular exposure to and familiarity with a candidate's work, including leaders and participants in programs. In situations where a candidate is already employed, this function may be provided by the leadership support or mutual ministry committee.

C. Learning agreement

Field experience is a time when gifts, aptitudes and skills for ministry can be developed and tested under supervision within a helpful and supportive setting. Each field experience needs to have a focus and specific learning goals. A written learning agreement contributes to the value of the total experience and builds a partnership among a candidate, supervisors, a congregation, college or seminary and a synod. Candidates in academic programs are encouraged to work initially with faculty advisers in developing learning goals. Those who are not in academic programs should consult with the Candidacy Committee in identifying goals. However formulated, the resulting learning goals must be approved by the Candidacy Committee and the supervisor.

Each area of specialization requires related goals and activities. Each candidate needs to view a specialization within the context of the overall mission and ministry of the site. A candidate gains experience in working with individuals and groups and has opportunities to develop specific skills, such as teaching, counseling, program development, leadership training, musical performance, visitation, administration or committee work. A candidate, whatever the specialization, gains experience in worship by serving as an assisting minister.

A critical area for all candidates is developing skills for team-ministry in order to work effectively with councils, committees and other staff. Whenever possible, a candidate participates in retreats with staff, council or committees and takes advantage of workshops offered in team ministry. A candidate also needs opportunities and financial assistance for participating in synodical and regional events, such as leadership conferences and synod assemblies.

D. Evaluation

Each candidate writes a self-evaluation, and the supervision partners (supervisor, mentor and advisory committee) each write an evaluation at the mid-way point and at the conclusion of the field experience. (The chairperson of the Advisory Committee represents the committee.) The evaluation provides information (used in assessing successful completion of the requirement) to the academic institution if the candidate is a student and to the Candidacy Committee. A written evaluation that describes experiences and involvements can be used in reflection and evaluation sessions between the supervisor/mentor and a candidate.

5. Field experience responsibilities

- A. The candidate has responsibility to:
 1. Work cooperatively with the academic institution (college or seminary) and/or the Candidacy Committee in arranging for an appropriate field experience.
 2. Establish an effective working relationship with all members of the supervisory team.
 3. Participate in writing the learning agreement.

4. Reflect theologically upon experiences.
 5. Cultivate a personal devotional life and practice self-care.
 6. Engage in the evaluative process and prepare the required written reports.
- B. The academic institution and the Candidacy Committee (when the candidate is not a student) are responsible to:
1. Work cooperatively with a candidate in arranging an appropriate field experience, including the identification and approval of a supervisor and a mentor.
 2. Prepare a learning agreement in consultation with the candidate.
 3. Negotiate a stipend when appropriate.
 4. Assist in determining whether the field experience should continue in the event of any change or conflict in the supervisory relationship.
 5. Receive evaluation reports and determine the successful completion of the field experience requirement.
- C. The supervisor/mentor/advisory committee are responsible to:
1. Participate in writing a learning agreement in consultation with the candidate, the academic institution, and/or the Candidacy Committee.
 2. Provide regularly scheduled opportunities to discuss and reflect on the candidate's growth and development in light of the learning goals.
 3. Listen to the candidate's concerns, as well as achievements, and provide support and constructive suggestions for growth and learning.
 4. Provide written evaluation reports to the candidate, the academic institution and the Candidacy Committee.

Deaconess

Introduction

The modern deacon/deaconess movement is an outgrowth of a revival of the New Testament diaconate that began in 19th century Germany. The movement came to America later in the same century and had an impact on many predecessor church bodies of the ELCA. The Deaconess Community of the ELCA is one of two Lutheran deaconess communities in North America that continue to be active. Because its predecessor body in the Lutheran Church in America served in both the United States and Canada, the Deaconess Community of the ELCA is incorporated through the ELCA, but it also serves the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

The other community is the independent Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA), headquartered in Valparaiso, Ind. Women active in the latter may be rostered in the ELCA as either associates in ministry or diaconal ministers.

“The Deaconess Community has been formed in order that skilled and committed women acting in community may complement the ministry of Word and Sacrament as well as the ministry of the whole people of God. This ministry is exercised within the context of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, to relate the Gospel to human need in every situation, and to extend the ministry of the Gospel to all the world” (Bylaws of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, 3.1).

The mission statement of the Deaconess Community is “Compelled by the love of Christ, and

sustained by community, we devote our lives to proclaiming the Gospel through ministries of mercy and servant leadership.” The vision of the Deaconess Community is “Empowered by the Holy Spirit for public ministry, we passionately seek to embody our mission, be a Christ-centered community of women, and witness to the Church and the world.”

Deaconesses candidates participate in the ELCA candidacy process in partnership with the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community. Following approval by both a Candidacy Committee and the Deaconess Community, a candidate is consecrated for service upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call. A deaconess serves under call from a congregation, a synod or a churchwide agency (ELCA or ELCIC). She may serve in a non-church agency or a non-stipendiary position if issued a call to do so by a congregation or her synod under the guidelines of the ELCA or the ELCIC.

Steps in candidacy

For women seeking to serve as deaconesses, candidacy includes participation in both the ELCA candidacy process and the candidacy process of the Deaconess Community. The former begins with entrance, continues through endorsement, and culminates with approval. The Deaconess Community process parallels this but uses investiture as an intermediate step. Traditionally, investiture was the point at which a candidate was entitled to wear the optional garb of the Deaconess Community. It is now the point at which a candidate becomes a full member of the community with all its rights and responsibilities.

Entrance includes discernment, the Candidacy Application Form, the Congregational Registration Form, an initial interview (optional) and screening, including a psychological evaluation and a background check through a Candidacy Committee. Deaconess candidates must also complete the application packet provided by the Deaconess Community and participate in an interview with the Deaconess Community Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.

The Candidacy Committee must receive a positive recommendation from the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community prior to granting entrance to a deaconess candidate. The Candidacy Committee may not grant entrance to any deaconess candidate denied by the Deaconess Community; however, the Candidacy Committee may postpone or deny a woman recommended by the community. Granting entrance qualifies a deaconess candidate to begin theological study.

Endorsement/investiture – A candidate goes through endorsement with a Candidacy Committee. Concurrently, the Deaconess Community makes a decision for investiture that parallels endorsement. Investiture is a decision by the Board of the Deaconess Community upon recommendation from its Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission. The two committees work collaboratively and cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual respect in discerning a call to diakonia and offering a candidate support and guidance. At investiture, a candidate participates in a public service of mutual affirmation, which admits her to the

privileges and responsibilities of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. Investiture is normally a prerequisite for internship. An onsite supervisor and local committee, supported by the Deaconess Community's director of congregational and synodical mission, provide supervision for internship. A candidate sends copies of all internship and CPE reports to both committees (synod and the Deaconess Community).

Approval for consecration and first call – Approval occurs upon the completion of all academic and practical experience requirements (see below). A deaconess candidate prepares the approval essay prior to meeting with both committees and forwards copies of the essay to both.

Neither the Candidacy Committee nor the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community may grant approval to a candidate who has been denied by the other. Either committee may postpone or deny a candidate approved by the other. When the two committees come to different decisions about a candidate, they must confer until they reach unanimity. The Candidacy Committee makes its decision for approval. Then the board of directors of the Deaconess Community, upon recommendation from the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission, makes its decision for approval.

Standards for members of the Deaconess Community

A deaconess must comply with the basic standards for all rostered leaders found in the ELCA "Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions," Chapter 7. In addition, the Deaconess Community maintains the following standards for admission and continuance in the community.

A deaconess is a woman who:

1. is an active communing member of an ELCA or ELCIC congregation,
2. affirms being called by God to ministry in the diaconate through the Deaconess Community and has sought and received confirmation of that call by this church,
3. is academically and professionally prepared to function within her chosen occupation,
4. is prepared to reflect theologically upon and articulate a Lutheran understanding of
 - a. the gospel,
 - b. the mission and ministry of the church expressed in the Lutheran Confessions, and
 - c. the mission, purpose and uniqueness of the diaconal call,
5. has been examined for theological competence in her vocation, occupation, and personal life and participates periodically in a formal period of reflection upon these themes,
6. is committed to the continual strengthening of her relationship to and theological understanding of the triune God through such means as prayer, study of the Holy Scriptures, personal devotional life and the corporate celebration of Word and Sacrament,
7. is willing to relate and witness to the mission and message of Christ, not only in her occupation but in her total life,
8. pledges to meet the established standards for Deaconess Community

- membership spiritually, personally, corporately, financially and in matters of time,
9. participates in continuing education and periodic evaluation in accordance with the highest recognized standards of her profession and/or occupation, and
 10. has a healthy self-awareness and seeks to maintain a balanced life and practice spiritual, vocational, interpersonal, intellectual, physical and emotional wellness.

Academic and practical criteria

Basic educational requirements

A deaconess candidate must meet certain requirements established by the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in consultation with the Deaconess Community.

1. She fulfills and completes the academic and professional standards for her chosen specialization, e.g. nurse, social worker, chaplain, parish deaconess, and any licensing or certification requirements of the state or province in which she will serve. Candidates usually earn a bachelor's degree or its equivalent related to the area of specialization.
2. She completes a course of theological studies, detailed below, which will prepare her to express and reflect on this church's understanding of the gospel, the ministry of the church as expressed in the historic Lutheran Confessions, the mission, purpose, and uniqueness of the Deaconess Community as an ecumenical diaconal organization, and her own responsibility within the Deaconess Community and the context of her chosen ministry.
3. A unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or other supervised pastoral education is required for all deaconess candidates.
4. An internship, usually for one year, is also required.

Theological education requirements

1. Deaconess candidates preparing to serve in an ELCA congregation earn a master's degree in theological studies (M.A.R., M.R.E., M.A., M.T.S., etc.) which may include a major in her area of specialization. Deaconess candidates also confer with the Deaconess Community regarding the selection of an appropriate seminary and the curriculum requirements of the community (see below).
2. A deaconess candidate preparing for a ministry that does not require a seminary degree will complete a course of theological studies planned in consultation with the community's director of congregational and synodical mission. This may include courses in the following areas: Old Testament, New Testament, church history, ethics, Lutheran Confessions, pastoral care and counseling, systematic theology, worship and liturgy, and field education. The Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission is responsible for monitoring the course of study and reporting the successful completion of a course of study to the Candidacy Committee.

Specialization

The ELCA needs a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings where rostered leaders serve. While forms of ministry may differ, there are common areas of specialization, focus and need. A call may include varied responsibilities, but a rostered leader should focus on at least one area of specialization during candidacy.

Deaconess candidates are expected to demonstrate ability and experience within one or more areas of specialization. The list below provides categories in which leaders may have strength or demonstrated competence. The list is not exhaustive but rather descriptive of a variety of areas in which a deaconess candidate might develop expertise.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Administration | Music and worship |
| Campus ministry | Outdoor ministry/camping |
| Chaplaincy | Parish nurse/health |
| Christian education | Public policy/advocacy |
| Community organizing | Senior ministries |
| Counseling/social work | Spiritual formation/direction |
| Early childhood administration | Teaching |
| Evangelism/mission | Volunteer coordination |
| Interim ministry | Worship leadership/preaching |
| Ministry in daily life | Youth and family |

Candidates are certified, trained or otherwise demonstrate competence in a specialization with the requisite education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through:

1. an undergraduate degree in the field of specialization, a major/concentration with a particular focus, or equivalent academic credentials or
2. professional licensure or certification, whenever required, or, in some cases, significant recognized workexperience.

A candidate declares an area of specialization (which must be reviewed and confirmed by the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission) by the time of investiture. For those seeking professional certification in chaplaincy, counseling and clinical education, ecclesiastical specialized pastoral care endorsement is normative and expected. The latter may be coordinated through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the ELCA near the time of assignment and first call.

Both the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission and the Candidacy Committee evaluate a candidate's readiness to serve as a deaconess. While a minimum of one area of specialization is expected, a candidate may be called to serve in a position with a broader position description. The committees will consider formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education and overall readiness and competence for serving as a rostered leader.

Deaconess candidate formation

Deaconess candidate formation enables a candidate to grow in the understanding of her call to diakonia and the Deaconess Community. A candidate participates in formational events with the following objectives:

1. to discern, through her experience, interactions, and prayer that her call is diaconal and also to life within the Deaconess Community,
2. to deepen her relationship with God through prayer, theological preparation, spiritual direction and community life,

3. to understand the history of the diaconate from biblical times to the present, and
4. to interpret diakonia to others.

The Deaconess Community offers a variety of opportunities for candidates to explore both the community and her personhood from a variety of viewpoints. Retreats, attendance at annual Deaconess Community assemblies, mentoring and other integrative events are all opportunities for each woman to grow in relationship with the community and her call.

Health and wellness

The ELCA envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving in rostered leadership and their spouses and families are encouraged, supported and motivated to grow in spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, and vocational well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance their lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of public ministry, candidates need to demonstrate and continue to develop healthy leadership qualities. Candidates who practice self-care and attend to the balance of all aspects of health enhance the church's faithful witness in the world. Candidates are expected to address any health concerns with the Candidacy Committee. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be more effective when supported by families, congregations, synods, seminaries and the Deaconess Community.

Spiritual and vocational formation

All deaconess candidates are expected to follow a regular practice of worship, prayer, Bible study and spiritual disciplines that sustain and support formal theological education and contextual learning. While such formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate is expected to engage in practices that are communal in scope and grounded in well-established traditions of the church. A deaconess candidate will also model Christian living for others.

At entrance, a candidate will be asked to share a plan for how she intends to nurture and sustain her faith life during candidacy. Such a plan may include such practices as spiritual direction, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer and regular participation in corporate worship. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment and healthy self-care will also be discussed.

Throughout the candidacy process candidacy committees inquire about a candidate's ongoing practices and habits and offer encouragement for lively engagement with all facets of Christian living.

Investiture

Upon completion of all preparatory requirements and endorsement by the board of directors of the Deaconess Community, each entranced candidate publicly participates in a service of mutual affirmation known as investiture, which admits her to the privileges and responsibilities of the Deaconess Community during the remainder of her candidacy. Investiture by the board of directors of the Deaconess Community shall be reported to the Candidacy Committee.

Internship

1. Having completed her theological education requirements following Investiture, a deaconess candidate normally participates in a one-year internship with a two-fold purpose:
 - a. to use and improve professional skills, and
 - b. to begin to function in her role as a deaconess.
2. A deaconess candidate participates in her own internship placement in consultation with the director of congregational and synodical mission of the Deaconess Community, bishops whose synods are seeking internship placements, and seminary faculty or contextual education staff (if she is attending seminary). A candidate submits a written plan for the internship prior to its implementation to the director of congregational and synodical mission for approval by the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.
3. In preparation for internship, a deaconess candidate receives a copy of the current internship manual from the Deaconess Community. Within two weeks of beginning an internship, she prepares, in consultation with the director of congregational and synodical mission and the on-site supervisor, an internship contract/covenant to be approved by the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.
4. The director of congregational and synodical mission reviews the internship evaluations and monthly reports. Final internship reports shall be sent to the Candidacy Committee and the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.

Consecration and first call

A deaconess candidate is approved for consecration upon successful completion of all requirements, compliance with “Vision and Expectations” of the ELCA, and being granted approval by both the Candidacy Committee and the board of directors of the Deaconess Community.

Approved deaconess candidates may participate in the churchwide assignments scheduled two times each year; however, usually they are assigned to a synod through administrative assignment.

The bishop of the synod of assignment and the deaconess candidate inform the directing deaconess of the candidate’s receipt and acceptance of a letter of call. The directing deaconess will relay this information to the board of directors of the Deaconess Community and assist the bishop in arranging and conducting a Service of Consecration that includes the directing deaconess or her appointee.

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is explained in Chapter 1 (page 20).

Diaconal minister

Diaconal ministry is a form of rostered leadership that helps the ELCA fulfill its mission of service in the world. Diaconal ministers are called to positions that exemplify the servant life and seek to equip and motivate others to live it. Diaconal ministers seek in a variety of ways to empower, equip and support the baptized people of God for participating in the mission of God in the world.

Diaconal ministers manifest the characteristics listed below.

1. They are rooted in the word of God.

Diaconal Ministers are committed to Christ and called to be spokespersons in the world for the gospel, the apostolic faith and the theological emphasis of the ELCA.

2. They are trained to carry out a particular service.

Diaconal ministers carry out a public ministry of service and witness. With demonstrated competence and expertise in a particular discipline, diaconal ministers serve both within and outside of congregational settings, in each case bearing responsibility for making linkages between the church and the world. Programmatic ministries within congregational settings should be marked by extension of the witness and service of the church into the wider community.

3. They are committed and prepared to equip the baptized for ministry in the world and in the church.

Diaconal ministers, along with other rostered leaders, lead and equip the baptized for ministry through appropriate programmatic ministries and by assisting people in discerning and using their gifts in ministry.

4. They serve at the boundaries between the church and the world.

Diaconal Ministers publicly speak for needs in the world to the church and also proclaim the gospel to the world through word and action.

5. They exemplify a life of Christ-like service that addresses all forms of human need.

The call to diaconal ministry is a lifelong commitment that supports and complements the ministry of Word and Sacrament by focusing on ministry to the whole person. Such a "diaconal bias" provides the lens and vision for developing the diaconal mission of the church expressed among and through its members.

6. They are grounded in community.

Diaconal ministers need the support and shared vision of a community committed to a common calling. Grounding in a diaconal community serves as a reminder of the need to seek and build community in all ministry contexts.

Steps in candidacy

Candidates for diaconal ministry participate fully in all steps of the candidacy process: entrance, endorsement and approval. A candidate is responsible for fulfilling all the expectations and requirements of the candidacy process.

Entrance begins a process of discernment to explore potential for rostered leadership and

readiness to begin candidacy. One year as an active member in an ELCA congregation is a prerequisite for entrance. The entrance process includes the Candidacy Application Form, the Congregational Registration Form, an initial interview (optional) and screening, including a psychological evaluation and a background check. The Candidacy Committee grants entrance before an applicant continues in a process of diaconal formation and preparation. Entrance is a prerequisite for attending the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event and beginning field experience.

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, a candidate makes application to a seminary. Affiliation with an ELCA seminary is required as part of the entrance process for any candidate attending a non-ELCA seminary. Through affiliation with an ELCA seminary, a candidate receives consultation and guidance regarding diaconal ministry requirements.

Endorsement encourages candidates who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for diaconal ministry and identifies areas for growth and development. Endorsement occurs at an appropriate time during the candidacy process. At least one full semester/quarter of graduate theological study and the completion of the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event are prerequisites for endorsement. A candidate submits the endorsement essay to both the Candidacy Committee and the seminary. The Candidacy Committee arranges for an endorsement interview and makes a decision. Once endorsed, a candidate may begin field experience (see below). At endorsement, a candidate also prepares and submits for approval a proposal for the diaconal ministry project.

Approval occurs when a candidate articulates a call to ministry and demonstrates readiness for rostered leadership in the ELCA. The approval interview comes near the satisfactory completion of all academic and practical requirements and affirms a call to public ministry. A candidate prepares the approval essay, available from the ELCA website, and submits it to the Candidacy Committee. A seminary faculty from the seminary of enrollment or affiliation makes a recommendation (Form D) to the Candidacy Committee, which arranges for an approval interview. The committee grants approval so that a candidate can be available for assignment and first call.

Standards

Individuals approved, consecrated and rostered as diaconal ministers in the ELCA shall satisfactorily fulfill and maintain the following basic standards established in the “Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (ELCA 7.52.11.):

- commitment to Christ,
- acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of the ELCA,
- willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of the church,
- academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships,
- commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example of faithful service and holy living,
- receipt and acceptance of a letter of call, and

- membership in an ELCA congregation.

Diaconal ministers must be fully prepared to meet the following criteria:

1. knowledge and understanding of the Word of God,
2. a Lutheran understanding of the gospel,
3. knowledge and understanding of the Lutheran Confessions,
4. theological reflection on issues of faith and life,
5. personal spiritual formation and ministry identity,
6. communication and planning skills necessary for effective witness, both verbally and in action,
7. specific training and skill in a specialization,
8. willingness to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry and assist others in proclaiming God's love through word and deed,
9. encouragement of individuals to discern a capacity for and calling to rostered leadership, and
10. an ability to work in partnership and serve the mission and ministry needs of the ELCA.

Academic and practical criteria

A candidate for diaconal ministry engages in a comprehensive program of preparation, including theological education, training in an area of specialization, formation for ministry, and field experience that includes a diaconal ministry project.

I. Theological education

Candidates complete a theological degree at the master's level. All ELCA seminaries provide such a degree, as well basic Lutheran studies required for diaconal ministry. Each seminary will advise its students regarding core curriculum and field education requirements. The core curriculum for diaconal ministry includes:

- A. Old Testament foundations
- B. New Testament foundations
- C. Church history foundations
- D. Church doctrine/systematic theology
- E. Ethics
- F. Lutheran Confessions
- G. Church in society

Candidates attending non-ELCA seminaries must affiliate with one of four ELCA seminaries: Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Wartburg Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, or Luther Seminary. The purpose of such affiliation is for consultation and guidance regarding core curriculum requirements, Lutheran studies, and coordination of field experience, supervision and the diaconal ministry project. The seminary of affiliation also provides a faculty recommendation (Form D) prior to approval. An affiliated candidate pays a fee to the ELCA seminary for these services. Application for admission is necessary only if academic courses are required.

II. Spiritual and vocational formation

All diaconal ministry candidates participate in regular worship, prayer, Bible study and

other spiritual disciplines that sustain and support involvement in theological education and contextual learning. While formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate is expected to engage in practices that are communal in scope, draw on well-established traditions of the church, and model Christian living for others.

At entrance, a candidate will share a plan for how his or her faith life will be sustained and nurtured during candidacy. A plan may include such practices as spiritual direction, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in corporate worship. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment and healthy self-care will also be discussed.

Throughout the candidacy process, candidacy committees inquire about a candidate's ongoing practices and habits and offer encouragement for lively engagement with all facets of Christian living.

A. **Diaconal Ministry Formation Event**

A Candidacy Committee must grant entrance before a candidate may participate in the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event. Such participation is a prerequisite for endorsement.

Purpose: The Diaconal Ministry Formation Event often precedes seminary and provides a diaconal perspective for shaping a course of study and field experience. At the event candidates:

1. study and explore the biblical, theological, historical and ecumenical background for diaconal ministry,
2. examine current diaconal models for ministry in a variety of settings through study and field trips,
3. gain deeper understandings of Lutheran theology as it relates to all forms of ministry, call and ecclesiology,
4. develop spiritual insights and disciplines for active ministry through worship, prayer and group processes designed for spiritual formation, development of community and mutual vision for diaconal ministry, and
5. explore areas for specialization and become oriented to standards, requirements and procedures for ecclesiastical endorsements and professional certifications or licensure.

Requirements: All applicants for the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event will:

1. complete the candidacy application process,
2. be granted entrance,
3. submit a formation event application and essay,
4. pay the registration fee,
5. complete all assigned readings prior to the formation event,
6. remain in residence throughout the formation event, and
7. have a completed background check on file with the Candidacy Committee.

A candidate may request academic credit prior to or at the time of registration for the formation event and will receive credit and upon successful completion of the formation event and other seminary requirements.

B. **Spiritual direction**

Through required spiritual direction, candidates seek to cultivate regular habits in spiritual practices and consistent patterns for healthy self-care. Candidates arrange for 40 hours of supervised spiritual direction, of which 10 hours are contact hours, and submit a report to the Candidacy Committee when the 40 hours have been completed.

III. Health and wellness

The ELCA envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving in rostered leadership and their spouses and families are encouraged, supported, and motivated to grow in spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, financial and vocational well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance both their own lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of public ministry, candidates need to demonstrate and continue to develop healthy leadership qualities. Candidates who practice self-care and balance all aspects of their health enhance this church's faithful witness in the world. Candidates will address any health concerns with the Candidacy Committee. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be more effective when supported by families, congregations, synods, seminaries and communities.

III. Specialization

The ELCA needs a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings. While forms of ministry might differ, there are common areas of specialization, focus and need. A call might include varied responsibilities, but a diaconal minister focuses on at least one area of specialization during candidacy. The list below provides categories in which candidates may demonstrate competence. The list is not exhaustive but rather descriptive of areas in which a diaconal minister might develop expertise.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Administration | Music and worship |
| Campus ministry | Outdoor ministry/camping |
| Chaplaincy | Parish nurse/health |
| Christian education | Public policy/advocacy |
| Community organizing | Senior ministries |
| Counseling/social work | Spiritual formation/direction |
| Early childhood administration | Teaching |
| Interim ministry | Volunteer coordination |
| Lay evangelism/mission | Worship leadership/preaching |
| Ministry in daily life | Youth and family |

Diaconal ministry candidates are certified, trained or otherwise demonstrate competence in a specialization with the requisite education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through:

1. an undergraduate or graduate degree in a specialization, a major/concentration with a particular focus, equivalent academic credentials, or
2. professional licensure or certification whenever normative, or in some cases significant

recognized work experience.

A candidate declares an area of specialization by the time of endorsement by submitting to the Candidacy Committee a written explanation of the particular diaconal focus for the specialization. The Candidacy Committee reviews and confirms the specialization. For those seeking professional certification in chaplaincy, counseling, clinical education or specialized pastoral care, ecclesiastical endorsement is normative and expected. The latter is coordinated through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit near the time of assignment and first call.

The Candidacy Committee is responsible for evaluating a candidate's readiness to serve as a diaconal minister. The committee considers formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education and overall readiness for rostered leadership.

IV. Field experience

Supervised field experience is vital in the preparation and formation of diaconal ministry candidates, because diaconal ministry takes place where church and society interface. Regardless of the particular ministry setting in which diaconal ministers serve, they need to understand the dynamic relationships within and between congregational and societal systems and provide leadership in connecting these systems. Placements for field experience need to reflect the scope of diaconal ministries and should be appropriate and specific to their distinctive characteristics.

A. Standards

1. 700 hours of supervised field experience at the interface between church and society, of which a minimum of 200 hours are a diaconal ministry project in an ELCA congregation. (Particular areas of specialization may require additional supervised clinical training in accredited programs.)
2. The ability to articulate and demonstrate a vision and understanding of diaconal ministry as a particular ministry of Word and Service rooted in the Word of God and witnessing to the gospel.
3. Demonstrated skills in analyzing systemic relationships within and between congregations, societal structures, and institutions and developing strategies or offering ministries at the interface of church and society.
4. Demonstrated competence in planning and implementing a diaconal ministry project designed to engage a congregation in offering ministry in the world. The project will demonstrate an understanding of Lutheran theology and Christian vocation.

B. Field experience placement

Field experience should be planned to give a candidate supervision in three integral areas: understanding and working with a congregation in relationship to its context, gaining expertise in an area of specialization, and reflecting theologically and spiritually on the relationship between the ministry context and the area of specialization. Field experience may be arranged sequentially and cumulatively to achieve the required 700 hours.

Candidates completing a project concurrent with seminary course work may wish to explore the possibility of independent study as part of the project.

The ELCA seminary granting a candidate's degree is responsible for supervision of the

field experience. For candidates enrolled at non-ELCA seminaries, the ELCA seminary of affiliation provides supervision of the field experience.

C. Candidates enrolled in academic degree programs

Seminaries may structure field experience in a variety of ways that include more than one setting. The structure for field experience is based on such factors as age, previous work experience, and particular contexts available to the seminary. Possible arrangements for supervised field experience may include:

1. a full-time (30-40 hours per week) field experience in a congregation or other setting (4-6 months),
2. a part-time position (10-20 hours per week) during the academic year completed over a one- to two-year period,
3. part-time work during the school year combined with a full-time summer position, or
4. a combination of CPE and field experience (a unit of CPE may count for up to 300 hours).

D. Candidates who have completed their academic degree program

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, a candidate seeks the guidance of the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation at the Lutheran School of Theology at Gettysburg, to arrange an appropriate field experience.

If already employed in a diaconal ministry setting, a candidate may, with the guidance of the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation and in consultation with the Candidacy Committee, arrange to complete supervised field experience in that place, once the Candidacy Committee has granted endorsement. Candidates who hold a degree from an ELCA seminary may seek the guidance of that seminary's contextual education office for field education placement and supervision in consultation with the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation and the Candidacy Committee.

E. The diaconal ministry project

The purpose of the diaconal ministry project is to provide a candidate with an opportunity to develop and implement a vision for engaging an ELCA congregation in the interface between societal need and Christian ministry. Through planning, executing and evaluating the project, a candidate can demonstrate competence in the areas of:

1. specialization,
2. an understanding of Lutheran theology and Christian vocation, and
3. integrating the specialization and Lutheran theology by engaging an ELCA congregation in a ministry of the baptized in the world.

A candidate develops and implements a project in consultation with the project mentor (appointed by the seminary) and a supervisor. The required 200 hours for the project include direct supervision, theological reflection, meetings with the congregational liaison committee, and planning and executing the project.

F. Guided reflection and supervision

Supervised field experiences provide opportunity for a candidate to work in an area of specialization while concurrently assigned to an ELCA congregation. There are three key

roles in the supervision of field experience.

1. **Project mentor.** The project mentor, who is assigned by the seminary, participates in the development of a learning agreement and a diaconal ministry project proposal. The mentor provides guided theological reflection on a candidate's field experience. The mentor also provides a written evaluation and submits it to the seminary field education office and the Candidacy Committee. At the time of approval, the mentor's evaluation will be incorporated into the Seminary Recommendation Form (Form D).
2. **On-site supervisor.** The on-site supervisor, who is also assigned by an ELCA seminary, provides administrative structure to the field experience, including a written description of responsibilities, consultation for mutual reflection on supervisory issues, periodic reviews, and a written final evaluation of a candidate's competence in a designated specialization. The candidate is responsible to see that a copy of the evaluation is submitted to the seminary field education office and the Candidacy Committee. In some cases, the on-site supervisor may serve as the project mentor.
3. **Congregational component.** While field experience may occur in a variety of settings, the diaconal ministry project must include an ELCA congregational component. A pastor of the congregation designates a congregational liaison committee to assist a candidate in planning and implementing the project. The liaison committee consists of three to five people, including a rostered staff member and laity with a particular interest in diaconal ministry and a candidate's specialization. The committee serves as a resource to a candidate for understanding the congregational system and its context. The committee also provides assistance in identifying an appropriate project and participates with a candidate in reflecting on and evaluating the project.

Before beginning a project, a candidate submits a one-page project proposal to the pastor and the congregational liaison committee for consideration and discussion. When the project itself has been completed and the candidate has written the project paper, the liaison committee reviews the project paper and prepares an evaluative commentary to be attached to the project mentor's evaluation.

G. The project paper. Upon completion of the diaconal ministry project, a candidate prepares a written paper, which includes:

- a. a description/analysis of the assigned congregational context,
 - b. a description/analysis of the project's purpose and goals,
 - c. reflection on the theological, biblical, historical and missional underpinnings of the project's goals,
 - d. a detailed description of the project and plans for its implementation,
 - e. a description of how the candidate guided the congregation's implementation of the project,
 - f. an evaluation of the project and its implementation, including strengths and weaknesses, and
 - g. reflection on the relationship of the project to the candidate's spiritual development.
- Following a written evaluation and response to the paper by the project mentor, the candidate submits the project paper to the appropriate seminary field education office with copies to the Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation at Gettysburg and the Candidacy Committee.

Consecration and first call

The Candidacy Committee grants approval to a diaconal ministry candidate when the candidate has successfully completed all requirements and complies with “Vision and Expectations.” All candidates participate in the churchwide assignment process. Following assignment and the candidate’s receipt and acceptance of a letter of call, the bishop of the synod where a first call is issued and accepted arranges for and conducts a service of consecration (www.elca.org/resources/worship, under “liturgy” tab).

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the ELCA is explained in Chapter 1 (page 20).