

*Steps toward
ministry...*

Discernment

Application

Entrance

Endorsement

Approval

Assignment

Call

You aren't on this journey alone.

DISCERNMENT

God gives us partners to help us listen for God's call in our lives:

The gift of prayer

Talking with God is at the heart of discernment.

The gift of family and friends

The ones who know you best can help you discern gifts, talents and growing edges.

The gift of communities of faith

Your home pastor, Sunday School teachers and mentors are valuable partners, as are leaders in other faith communities, like outdoor ministry & campus ministry sites. These pastors and faith friends offer discerning space and words of blessing.

The gift of candidacy committees

Your synod candidacy committee offers welcome, evaluation and formation in your discernment.

The gift of our seminaries

Admissions directors, financial aid officers, professors and fellow travelers in discernment offer another perspective. Seminary sampler weekends are offered at all our ELCA seminaries.

SERVING GOD THROUGH PUBLIC, PROFESSIONAL (ROSTERED) MINISTRY IN THE ELCA



Candidacy Process in the Upper Susquehanna Synod 2009

WHAT IS CANDIDACY?

Candidacy is the name of a process.

This process raises up, prepares, certifies and places public leaders in the ELCA. Public ministers include commissioned **Associates in Ministry**, consecrated **Diaconal Ministers** and **Deaconesses**, and ordained Pastors.

Candidacy is an offering!

Because of God's love for the world, we notice the world around us and the needs of our neighbors. The world's needs call out our gifts in service to our neighbor — and then we figure out how we need to be equipped to live out that service. This is the vocation of all the baptized as we live out our callings in the world.

For some, the world's needs call them to consider professional service under call in the church. Candidates for public ministry make themselves available to discernment that considers both the call that wells up within them, as well as the call that is affirmed by others in the church, in a process of professional leadership development we call *candidacy* in the ELCA.

Someone considering whether God may be calling them to public ministry has entered a lifelong process of **discernment**. Discernment will likely include a variety of partners (see back of this brochure), but should definitely include one's home pastor.

An applicant for Candidacy must be an active member of an ELCA congregation for at least one year prior to their entrance interview.

The book "**What Shall I Say?**" (available from Augsburg Fortress or the synod's Candidacy Committee) may be helpful in deciding to enter the candidacy process.

An applicant for candidacy completes an **application** form and autobiographical essay (available online: www.elca.org).

Applicant's congregation receives, completes, and submits a Congregational Registration form.

Applicant pays \$150 Application Fee and submits school transcripts.

Synod sets up Initial Interview with applicant; interviewer makes recommendation to Candidacy Committee for Entrance decision.

Applicant submits to background check online as directed.

Applicant undergoes Psychological Evaluation with designated agency.

An applicant with a completed application is invited to meet with the Candidacy Committee for an **Entrance** interview.

Candidacy Committee members review all application materials.

At the Entrance Interview, the applicant and Committee explore the individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin theological study and the candidacy process in the ELCA.

A positive Entrance Decision makes an "applicant" a "candidate", and allows the candidate to be admitted to an ELCA seminary.

Candidates complete their first year of seminary, after which they may complete a unit of **CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education)** in an accredited CPE program. (Candidates for ordained ministry and some candidates for rostered lay ministries are required to complete one unit of CPE.)

Towards the end of their first year of study, candidates write the **Endorsement Essay** (available each year at www.elca.org) in preparation for their Endorsement Panel.

The Endorsement Panel is composed of one seminary faculty member and two Candidacy Committee members.

The Endorsement Panel recommends an **Endorsement** Decision to the entire Candidacy Committee whose action determines the candidate's Endorsement.

Endorsement encourages and affirms those who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for a specific form of ministry in the ELCA, as well as identifies areas for growth and development.

A positive Endorsement Decision enables a candidate to participate in an ELCA internship or field experience after completing academic requirements.

Candidates for ordained ministry are required to complete a supervised **internship** under the support of the seminary.

Associate in Ministry candidates are required to complete a supervised **field experience** of one year, with a minimum of 600 supervised hours.

Deaconess candidates are required to complete a **one-year internship** in partnership with the ELCA Deaconess Community.

Candidates for Diaconal Ministry are required to complete 700 hours of supervised training in a **field experience**, including a minimum of 200 hours toward their diaconal ministry project in a congregation.

Toward the end of a candidate's internship or field experience, the candidate writes the **Approval Essay** (available each year at www.elca.org) in preparation for their Approval Interview.

In the Approval Essay and Interview, the candidate articulates the call to ministry and demonstrates readiness to assume a leadership role as a rostered minister in the ELCA.

A positive Approval decision affirms the candidate's character, commitment, preparation, and ability to serve as a called leader, and enables the candidate to participate in the ELCA's assignment process.

Approved candidates complete resume' forms for the **Assignment** process, indicating their own particular gifts, skills, preferences, and restrictions for a call to serve.

The churchwide assignment process assigns approved candidates to a synod of this church based on the ministry needs of the church. They are then available for a Letter of Call for service in the ELCA.

Assigned candidates enter a **Call** process, interviewing with call committees, eventually receiving and accepting a call to ministry.

Called candidates are commissioned, consecrated, or ordained for service.