

REPORT OF THE CANDIDACY COMMITTEE THE UPPER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD-ELCA, 2025

The Candidacy Committee is tasked with walking with potential leaders of this church as they discern and prepare for the church's call to become rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Ministers of Word and Service. Committee members are called to appraise the character, qualifications, and potential of applicants and candidates, while providing guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the candidacy process.

Candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA meet with the Candidacy Committee for three decisions during the candidacy process:

ENTRANCE: The first step is the applicant's "entrance" to candidacy, assessing the person's initial discernment and readiness, and vetting their background. A candidate must have a positive entrance decision before starting seminary classes.

ENDORSEMENT: The second decision comes after some period of study. Candidates are assessed on their progress of formation, and their clarity of call to a particular roster. A positive endorsement decision is required before rostered minister candidates may start their internships.

APPROVAL: The final decision comes near the completion of coursework and internship. Candidates are assessed on their ability, willingness, and sense of calling to serve as a rostered leader. After a positive approval decision, a candidate is available for call as an ordained leader.

In addition to its responsibilities for the candidacy process, the committee also distributes synod scholarship funds to its candidates enrolled in seminary courses. The committee distributed a scholarship of \$500 each to four of the candidates engaged in seminary coursework for a total of \$2,000. Additionally, two of our students received grant funding from the Fund for Leaders program of the ELCA: Diane Booth Bubb and Ruth Ann Kephart.

Current Candidacy Committee Members:

Bishop Craig A. Miller; Rev. A. Rebecca Resch, ELCA Regional Candidacy Leadership Manager; MeeCee Baker; Deacon MaryLou Byerley; James Girven, SAM; Rev. Scott Kershner (resigned 12/24); Rev. Christine Kirchner, Secretary; Rev. Karla Leiby, Chair; Rev. Katy Moran; Pamela Rhoades; Eileen Stauffer; Rev. Dr. Gilson Waldkoenig, United Lutheran Seminary Representative.

The Candidacy Committee meets an average of three times during the year. Since the 2024 Synod Assembly, the committee met September 17, 2024 and is scheduled to meet May 1, 2025.

Candidate Information:

Diane Booth Bubb - Diane received a positive entrance decision on December 12, 2023 and is currently enrolled at United Lutheran Seminary for her coursework. She continues to serve as a Synodically Authorized Minister at Trinity Lutheran and Mt. Zion Lutheran, Hughesville.

Victoria (Tori) Callahan/Giger—Victoria was assigned to the Region 7, received a part time call from St. Andrew's Ev. Lutheran Church, Perkasio, PA and was ordained on January 12, 2025.

Larry Herrold—Larry received a positive entrance decision on January 21, 2021; a positive Endorsement decision on December 12, 2023. He completed his seminary coursework at United Lutheran Seminary in May of 2024 and began internship at Beaver Lutheran Church in July of 2024. He is scheduled for his approval phase on May 1, 2025.

Ruth Ann Kephart – Ruth Ann received a positive Entrance decision on January 26, 2023. She is a TEEM* candidate and is studying at United Lutheran Seminary-Gettysburg. Ruth Ann is serving as Vicar at St. Paul, Milroy and St. Johns, Seiglerville.

Amy Shuck — Amy received a positive Entrance decision on August 19, 2021; a positive endorsement decision on December 12, 2023. She is a TEEM* candidate and has completed her coursework at United Lutheran Seminary-Gettysburg. Amy will complete her internship with First Lutheran, Watsontown as of April 30, 2025. She is scheduled for her approval phase on May 1, 2025.

The Candidacy Committee is thankful for the opportunity to serve the Upper Susquehanna Synod. As we continue to prayerfully discern God's call, along with our candidates, we remind our sisters and brothers in Christ that we all have a responsibility to raise up leaders for the church. If you observe the gifts for ministry in someone, lift up those gifts to them and let them know about the Candidacy Committee! Our Bishop and the committee are available to assist and support a potential candidate's discernment of their call to ministry.

The Candidacy Committee along with the Lay Ministry Institute will be hosting a Discernment Event on October 11, 2025 at Camp Mount Luther. This event is for anyone discerning God's call to either rostered and lay ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Karla S. Leiby
Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Formation
Candidacy Committee Chair, Upper Susquehanna Synod

*TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries)