



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Candidacy and Leadership  
Regions 7 and 8  
2025 Annual Report to Synod Assembly

*The church of Christ, in every age beset by change, but Spirit-led, must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead. [...] We have no mission but to serve in full obedience to our Lord; to care for all, without reserve, and spread his liberating word.* Green, Fred Pratt. "The Church of Christ, in Every Age." Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006, #729, vv.1 and 4

Friends in Christ, grace to you and peace as you meet in assembly. I write to you with greetings from my Candidacy Team Colleagues on Churchwide Staff and my home synod of New Jersey. Many of you are gathering to elect a bishop this year. Know that you are being held in prayer by the wider church as you gather, discern, and elect a new bishop.

In navigating times of change, the church needs leaders. We celebrate our lay leadership while we also look for people who sense a call and have gifts to be ordained as deacons or pastors. Have you ever thought about becoming a pastor? Are you curious about what a deacon does? Have a love for serving in the church and have wondered if that could become a job? Do you want to share the gospel and empower others to share the good news of Jesus?

Becoming a pastor or deacon is more than earning a degree for a job. It is also about having an internal and external sense of God's call that is affirmed by the wider church. The work of discerning the call and readiness for ordained ministry does not happen alone. It is guided by the Holy Spirit in a collaborative ministry of synod leaders, synod staff, seminary faculty, contextual education partners, and churchwide staff. This is the ministry of candidacy.

Your synod has a candidacy committee and I invite you to read about their work in a different report in this bulletin. They have met several times in the past year to have confidential interviews with possible future leaders to determine call and readiness. If you or someone you know is wondering about becoming a deacon or pastor, please contact your bishop or an Assistant to the Bishop.

Candidacy is a collaborative process with many partners so even if your bishop or synod staff changes, the candidacy ministry of your synod will continue. We are in this ministry together for the sake of the church and the world.

Since my last report to you in 2024, candidacy leaders from regions 7 and 8 met at United Lutheran Seminary for training and collaboration days. We look forward to meeting again in October 2025.

Beginning in 2022, the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG) has been re-envisioning the candidacy process. The CLDWG has started to share possible candidacy changes. You can learn more at: [www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Candidacy-Leadership-Development](http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Candidacy-Leadership-Development)

I have the honor of being on holy ground with members of your synod as we listen to people discern their possible call, ask questions, and assess their readiness to be deacons or pastors in the church. Thank you for your synod's participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

In Christ,  
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Region 7: ~ New Jersey Synod ~ New England Synod ~ Metropolitan New York Synod ~ Upstate New York Synod ~  
~ Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Slovak Zion Synod ~

Region 8: ~ Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Allegheny Synod ~  
~ Lower Susquehanna Synod ~ Upper Susquehanna Synod ~ Delaware-Maryland Synod ~  
~ Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod ~ West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod ~