

Submitted , 2026

REPORT OF THE CANDIDACY COMMITTEE
THE UPPER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD-ELCA, 2026

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 to one of the candidates engaged in seminary coursework.

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. Karla Leiby, Chair; Rev. Katy Moran, Secretary; Pamela Rhoades; Eileen Stauffer; Rev. Beth George; Rev. Dr. Gilson Waldkoenig, United Lutheran Seminary Representative.

The Candidacy Committee meets an average of three times during the year. Since the 2025 Synod Assembly, the committee met September 23, 2025, December 9, 2025 and is scheduled to meet April 30, 2026.

Candidate Information:

Diane Booth Bubb - Diane received a positive endorsement decision on September 23, 2025 December 12, 2023. She continues to complete coursework at United Lutheran Seminary and is completing her internship at Washingtonville Lutheran Church. She is scheduled for Approval Interview at that April meeting.

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Larry Herrold—Larry received a positive approval decision on May 1, 2025 and a full-time call to Beaver Lutheran Church. He was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament at Zion Lutheran Church on August 16, 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.

Ann Milheim – Ann received a positive Entrance decision on December 9, 2025. She will be studying at United Lutheran Seminary beginning in the Fall of 2026.

Amy Shuck — Amy received a positive approval decision on May 1, 2025 and a three quarter time call to First Lutheran, Watsonstown. She was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament at First Lutheran on August 17, 2025.

Sue Ellen Spotts – Sue Ellen received a positive approval on her request for reinstatement to the Roster of Word and Service on December 9, 2025. She will continue to serve in her role as the Director of Evangelical Mission for both the Upper Susquehanna and Allegheny Synods.

The Candidacy Committee along with the Lay Ministry Institute hosted a Discernment Event, Sacred Steps on October 11, 2025 at Camp Mount Luther. The day included keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann from United Lutheran Seminary, discernment activities, Spiritual gifts assessment, personal reflection activities, and panel of leaders who shared their own discernment and call experiences. Each participant was also provided with a resource packet with that included contacts for next steps in their discernment journey. Twenty-five people attended.

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.

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)