

INVITATION TO SERVICE

ROSTERED MINISTRY IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

In baptism, God calls all Christians to use their gifts to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. In order to minister most effectively, however, the church also needs persons with particular leadership gifts to serve in its rostered ministries.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has four distinct rostered ministries:

- ordained ministers of Word and sacrament - pastors
- consecrated deaconesses
- consecrated diaconal ministers
- commissioned associates in ministry

The church needs a variety of leaders who can serve the many and various mission needs that challenge us in the years ahead.

What about you? Have you considered whether you might possess the gifts needed in one of this church's rostered ministries? If you think you might, you are cordially invited on a journey that will help you and the church decide if God is indeed calling you into one of these ministries.

DISCERNMENT This journey begins with discernment — a process that involves prayer, conversation with others, and reflection over a period of time. The book **What Shall I Say?** (Augsburg #34-1-2106) provides guidance and direction for individuals in this process. Should this initial discernment lead one to believe that he or she might be called to rostered ministry, the journey continues with candidacy.

CANDIDACY Candidacy is the churchwide process of discernment, preparation and formation leading to rostered ministry. It is a partnership that engages candidate, congregation, synod, seminary, and the Division for Ministry in guidance, evaluation, theological education and practical preparation.

All potential candidates are strongly encouraged to begin the candidacy process one full year prior to beginning theological education. An applicant must be an active member of an ELCA congregation for a minimum of one year prior to registration.

STEPS IN THE CANDIDACY PROCESS

ENTRANCE After a time of discernment, the first step in candidacy includes completion of the candidate application form which is received from the synod.

Under the guidance and direction of the synod the applicant completes the application process and participates in several interviews.

As a partner in discernment, the home congregation is asked to register and support the applicant.

The candidacy committee makes an entrance decision which determines an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin theological study.

During the entrance process, and in consultation with the candidacy committee, the applicant applies for admission to an ELCA seminary, or to another accredited seminary.

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ENDORSEMENT Endorsement occurs during the period of theological education. It evaluates and affirms the continued growth in preparation for, and in sense of call to, rostered ministry. A reflective essay and interview are included at this step as developmental goals are identified for each individual. A positive endorsement decision by the candidacy committee enables a candidate to participate in an ELCA internship or supervised field experience.

APPROVAL Approval occurs during the final year of study and indicates the church's confidence that the candidate is ready to begin service in one of the rostered ministries of the ELCA. The approval decision is made by the candidacy committee in consultation with an ELCA seminary faculty. Once approved, candidates participate in a churchwide assignment process and are then eligible to receive a Letter of Call for service in the church.

CANDIDACY IS AN INVITATION TO SERVICE IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Division for Ministry assists the synods and seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in developing and carrying out programs for the identification, preparation and evaluation of candidates for the ordained, consecrated and commissioned ministries of this church.

For more information about candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America contact your synod office or the Division for Ministry at 1-800-638-3522 ext.2887.

For information about theological education opportunities, contact any ELCA seminary. For information regarding all eight ELCA seminaries order "Seminaries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" 68-0096 from Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1-800-328-4648.

To Service...