

DISCERNMENT

Discernment is an ongoing process which continues throughout the candidacy process. Discernment involves not only listening to God's call to you but also God's call to you through others. This is the time to talk with your pastor, friends, family, and other people in the congregation about your gifts for public ministry.

This is also a time to discern the time line for entering into the candidacy process. Even someone who has been called by God to serve will need to get some things in order to give them the best start in seminary and in their public ministry.

Attention should be paid to family readiness, finances, education preparedness, ability to accept a call to the whole church, gifts and areas of growth.

Part of discernment is also a personal assessment of your own discipleship practices: Worship, prayer, study, giving, encouraging, serving.

Resources may include:

- "What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry"—ISBN 978-0-9636-6301-6
- www.elca.org (Vocation and Education) Becoming a Leader and the process of candidacy
- Financial Planners

WHERE DO I START?

The place to begin is in prayer. Continue in study. Review the resources found on the ELCA website (www.elca.org) and become familiar with the process.

Talk with your pastor.

Call or email Pastor Julie Bailey in the synod office.



CALLED TO
PUBLIC
MINISTRY—
STEPS IN THE
CANDIDACY
PROCESS

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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Entrance

Entrance begins a process of discernment that explores an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin the process of seminary preparation and candidacy in the ELCA. One year of active membership in an ELCA congregation is required prior to entrance.

The Entrance Process includes:

- ☞ Candidacy Application,
- ☞ Entrance Essay,
- ☞ Entrance Information Form,
- ☞ Transcripts,
- ☞ Congregational Registration,
- ☞ Initial Interview,
- ☞ Background Check, and
- ☞ Psychological Evaluation through the synod Candidacy Committee.
- ☞ \$400 application fee

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, application is made to the seminary.

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. Candidates for participate in an Endorsement Panel composed of at least two Candidacy Committee members and the seminary faculty advisor at an ELCA seminary, normally in the fall of the second year of study. A recommendation is made to the synod Candidacy Committee for an Endorsement Decision.

A candidate attending a non-ELCA seminary must affiliate with an ELCA seminary prior to Endorsement. Affiliated candidates will participate in an Endorsement Interview with the Candidacy Committee. An appropriate faculty advisor may be consulted or invited to participate.

Once endorsed, candidates complete an approved ELCA internship under the supervision of an ELCA seminary. Only endorsed candidates may participate in an ELCA internship.

The Endorsement Process includes:

- ☞ Endorsement Essay
- ☞ CPE Evaluations
- ☞ Transcripts
- ☞ Follow up on anything in the entrance process

Approval

Approval occurs when the candidate articulates the call to ministry and demonstrates readiness to assume a leadership role as a rostered minister in the ELCA. Approval comes near completion of all academic and practical requirements. This final step includes preparation of the Approval Essay and participation in the Approval Interview. A positive decision must be made in order to be available for assignment, ordination, and first call for service to this whole church.

The Approval Process includes:

- ☞ Approval Essay
- ☞ Internship Evaluations
- ☞ ELCA Faculty Recommendation (Form D)
- ☞ Any follow up from Entrance and Endorsement

**These interviews occur with the Candidacy Committee back in Michigan.