

General Candidacy Information

Welcome to the Candidacy Process

Welcome! You likely opened this page because you want to learn more about the process to becoming a rostered minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). This process is called candidacy and operates parallel to seminary degree or certificate programs. The information on the other tabs provide guidance for each step along the way. The Office of the Bishop and Synod Candidacy Committee stand ready to accompany you in your discernment. Please continue looking through the information on this resource tab. Please direct your questions to [Deacon Jodi Schuman](#), Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy and Operations.

First Steps

People of any age interested in exploring a call to ministry as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA should begin with a conversation with their pastor. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, pastors shall “seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.”¹

Becoming a rostered minister involves coursework from an accredited seminary. You are encouraged to explore the seven [ELCA seminaries](#) and their degree programs and offerings. Those interested in becoming a pastor would look at Master of Divinity programs. Those interested in becoming a deacon would look at Master of Arts programs. The seminaries also offer certificate programs.

Please be in touch with the Office of the Bishop. [Deacon Jodi Schuman](#) welcomes a conversation to hear your call story and answer your questions. These preliminary meetings can be in person or online.

The Candidacy process is consistent throughout the ELCA and guided by a [Candidacy Manual](#). The manual contains an abundance of helpful information for those just wondering about rostered ministry to those preparing for their first call as a new pastor or deacon. The [Candidacy Resources](#) page contains links to documents referred to in the Candidacy Manual.

Brief Overview of Candidacy Process

1. Have discernment conversations
2. Submit [Candidacy Application](#)
3. Submit other items required in Preparing for Entrance
4. Participate in Entrance Panel
5. Complete a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education
6. Submit items required in Preparing for Endorsement
7. Participate in Endorsement Panel
8. Complete Internship
9. Submit items required in Preparing for Approval and First Call