

45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women
Executive Summary – Lay Roster Questionnaire Report 2015
Research and Evaluation, Office of the Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
John Hessian
July 2016

The year 2015 was the 45th anniversary of the ordination of women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA and its predecessor church bodies). An extensive survey was conducted to explore the differences and similarities in the ministerial experiences between rostered men and women. This survey was patterned after surveys in 1995 and 2005, which were fielded in support of the 25th and 35th anniversaries of the ordination of women.

The questionnaire was fielded to the entire lay roster¹, 657 people (79.0% female/21.0% male, 98.5% white/1.5% ethnic specific) in January 2015, and it was also available online. Four hundred sixteen people completed the survey for a response rate of 63.3% (81.3% female/18.8% male, 98.3% white/1.7% ethnic specific).

The median age of the respondents was 59. Over half of the respondents (53.4%) were 55 years of age or older.

This executive summary presents the highlights on the following topics:

- Compensation
- Occupational Roles
- Attributes and Experiences

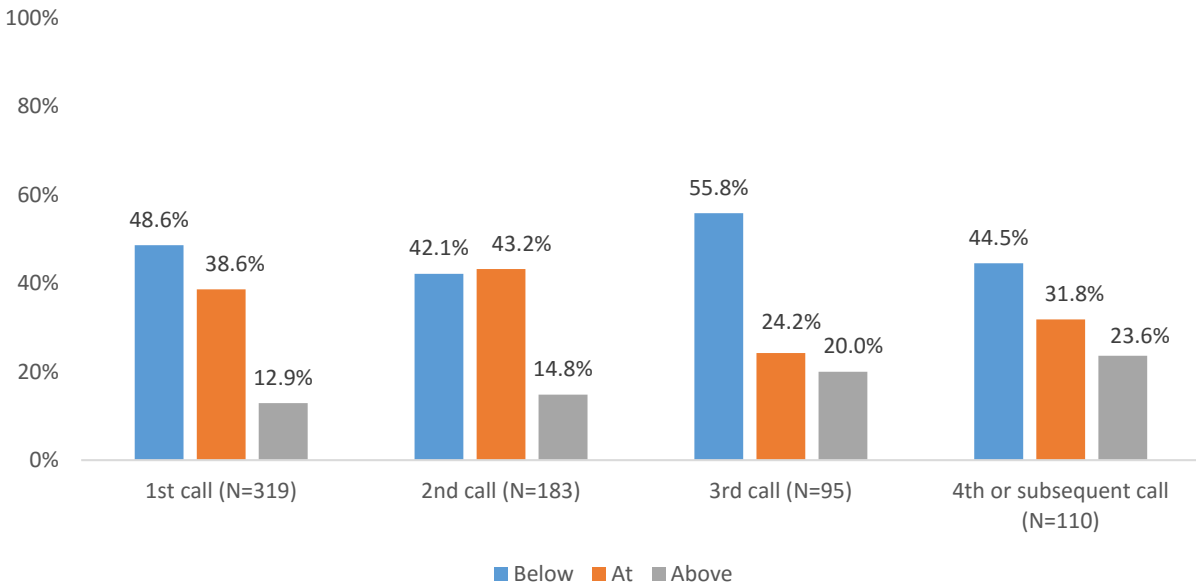
Compensation

Lay rostered leaders are regularly compensated below synod guidelines.² For all calls, 47 percent of lay rostered leaders reported being compensated below synod guidelines. (See Figure 1.) A significantly higher percentage of ordained clergy are compensated at synod guidelines compared to their rostered colleagues. Comparing lay roster compensation to the 2005 data is not as consistent, however. For first and third calls, the percentage of respondents compensated at or above synod guidelines has declined. For second and fourth or subsequent calls, those compensated at or above synod guidelines has increased.

¹ The lay roster is the roster of Word and Service. It includes deaconesses, diaconal ministers and associates in ministry.

² Each synod determines its own salary guidelines for lay rostered leaders called to congregations. This survey asked respondents if their salary was at, below or above their synod guidelines.

Figure 1: Percent of Lay Rostered Leaders At, Above or Below Synod Compensation Guidelines



Occupational Roles

The most common roles for those on the lay roster are the following: education/faith development, parish music director/musician, youth and family ministry, synod or churchwide staff and chaplaincy. The three roles that respondents felt they embodied most were leader, servant and teacher. Significantly more lay rostered respondents feel they are servants and community organizers compared to ordained clergy. Even though the lay roster is 98 percent white and 81 percent female, the role of community organizer is similar to the responses from the ethnic-specific ordained clergy, not white female clergy.

Attributes and Experiences

Self-description

More lay roster respondents feel they are directive and goal-oriented compared to ordained clergy. Similar to the ordained clergy, more respondents on the lay roster describe themselves as “helpful” in 2015 compared to 2005. Also similar to ordained clergy, fewer feel anxious or confused in 2015 compared to 2005.

The top three markers of success in their ministry are the same in 2015 as they were in 2005. They are the following:

- Developing strong relationships of trust
- Being stable and steady in providing ministry
- Being faithful in providing ministry

The least important markers of success in their ministry are somewhat different from 2005. They are the following:

- Advocating for justice in parish and community
- Effective preaching and worship leadership
- Seeing steady growth in membership and/or attendance

Experiences in Church Settings

The survey included questions about possible experiences in different church settings. Because the sample size of men (N=78) is low, it is difficult to gauge significance when comparing men with women (N=338). However, there are experiences specifically related to gender where the experiences of men and women are clearly different. The following are the areas of greatest difference.

More women feel they represent their gender in what they say or do

- With ecumenical colleagues
- In the congregation or ministry setting
- With ELCA rostered leaders

More women have thought about how their gender affects how people perceive them

- With ELCA rostered leaders
- With ecumenical colleagues
- By synod or churchwide staff

More women have experienced gender-based discrimination

- In the congregation or ministry setting

Inclusive Language

Ordained clergy are somewhat more likely to take actions related to inclusive language than those on the lay roster. Interestingly, lay male rostered leaders are more likely to take actions related to inclusive language than their lay female colleagues. There is very little difference in how actions related to inclusive or gender-neutral language were received by the congregations/ministry settings of lay rostered and ordained clergy respondents.

Seminary and Seminary Debt

The responses of the lay rostered respondents were almost identical to the respondents of the white female ordained clergy as to whether seminary prepared them well for their first call. Seventy-seven percent of the lay roster and 76 percent of the white female clergy agreed or strongly agreed that seminary prepared them well for their first call.

Those on the lay roster owe significantly less educational debt than their ordained female clergy colleagues. The level of debt owed by those on the lay roster is similar to the amount owed by ordained male clergy. This is because an M.Div. requires more time and hence, more tuition. Also, more of the ordained male clergy graduated from seminary when tuition costs were less expensive.

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The questionnaire was fielded to the entire lay roster¹, 657 people (79.0% female/21.0% male, 98.5% white/1.5% ethnic specific) in January 2015, and it was also available online. Four hundred sixteen people completed the survey for a response rate of 63.3% (81.3% female/18.8% male, 98.3% white/1.7% ethnic specific).

The median age of the respondents was 59. Over half of the respondents (53.4%) were 55 years of age or older.

Of the four hundred one responses, the most common position is in education/faith development (14.2%) or as parish music director/musician (13.0%). Other common areas of service were in youth and family ministry, as synod or churchwide staff or in chaplaincy. Eighty-two percent of the respondents feel their roles and responsibilities match their title well or very well.

Compensation

Lay rostered leaders were asked to indicate if, for the majority of the time in any of their calls, their compensation was at, above, or below the synod guidelines. Close to half of those on the lay roster are compensated below synod guidelines. Figure 1 shows the results.

¹ The lay roster is the roster of Word and Service. It includes deaconesses, diaconal ministers and associates in ministry.

Figure 1: Percent of Lay Rostered Leaders At, Above or Below Synod Compensation Guidelines

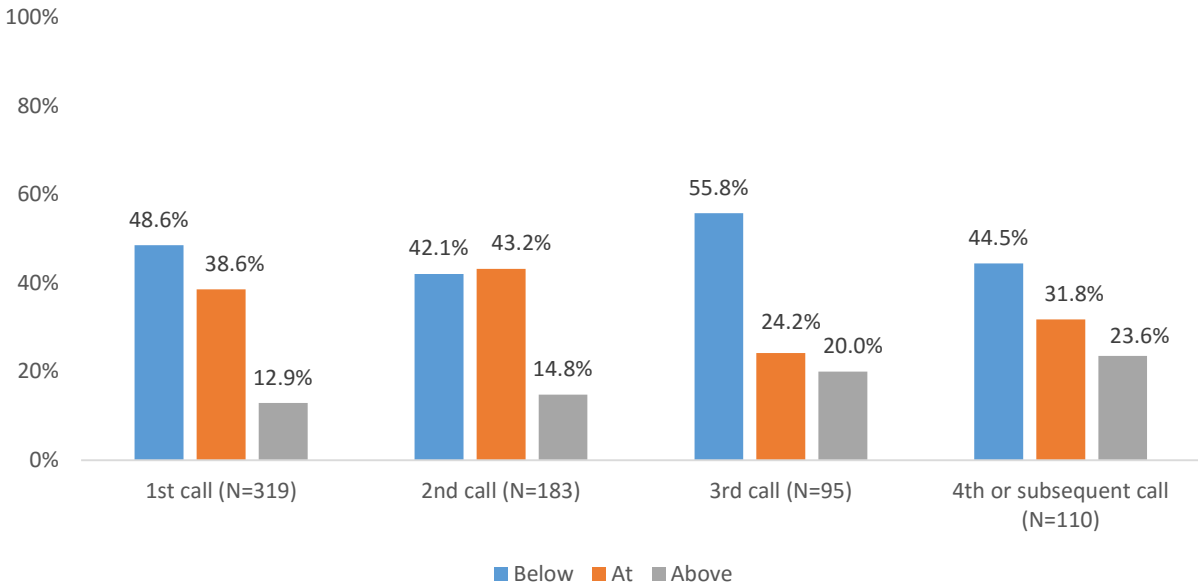


Figure 2 shows results for ordained clergy. A higher percentage of ordained clergy are compensated at synod guidelines than those on the lay roster. While the synod bishop/staff often treat the base-salary guideline for a full-time, first-call pastor as a requirement for approving the call, that does not appear to be the case with the lay roster.

Figure 2: Percent of Clergy At, Above or Below Synod Compensation Guidelines

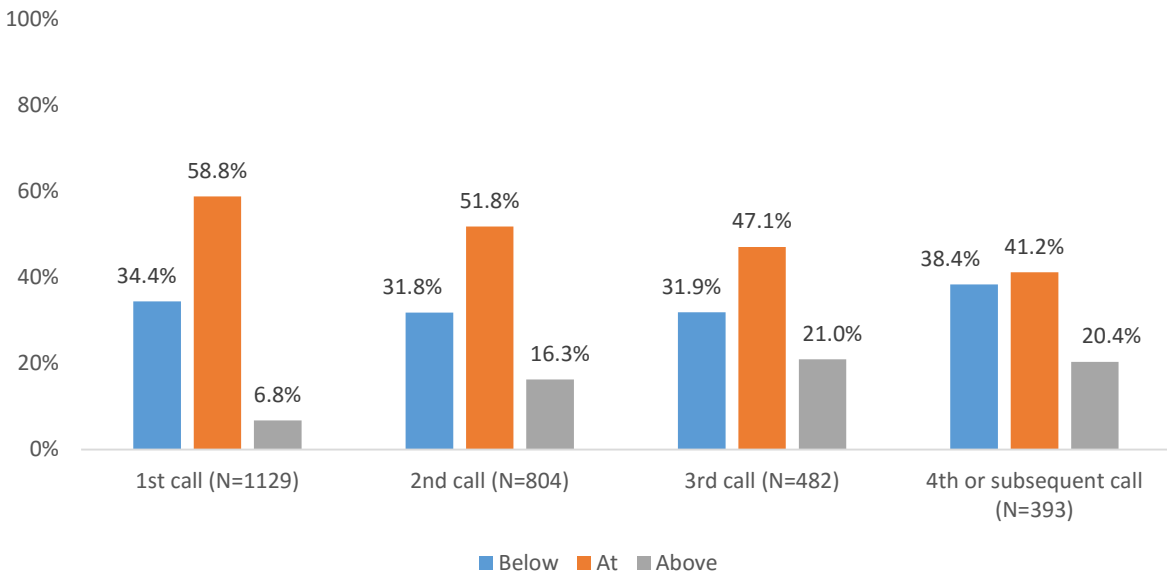


Table 1 presents a comparison of compensation for the lay roster in 2005 and 2015. As can be seen, compensation for those in their first call has not kept up with synod guidelines in this ten-year period.

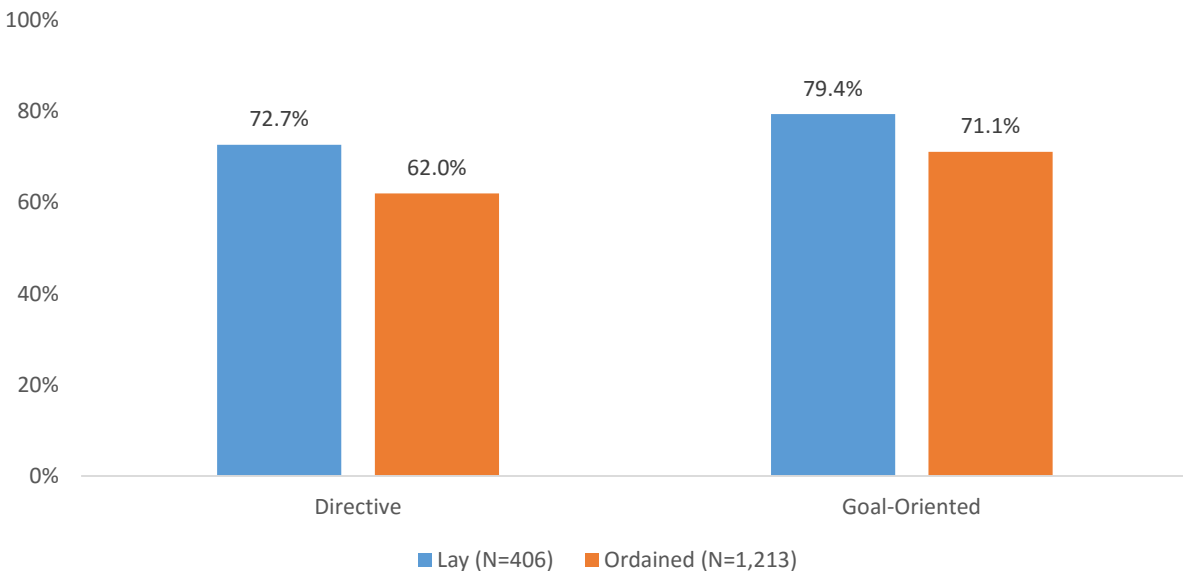
Table 1: Percent of Lay Rostered Leaders At, Above or Below Synod Compensation Guidelines in 2005 and 2015

	1 st Call (2005 N=323) (2015 N=319)			2 nd Call (2005 N=276) (2015 N=183)			3 rd Call (2005 N=120) (2015 N=95)			4 th or subsequent call (2005 N=64) (2015 N=110)		
	Below	At	Above	Below	At	Above	Below	At	Above	Below	At	Above
2005 Compensation	32.2%	42.1%	25.7%	52.5%	34.6%	12.7%	52.5%	31.7%	15.8%	59.4%	15.6%	25.0%
2015 Compensation	48.6%	38.6%	12.9%	42.1%	43.2%	14.8%	55.8%	24.2%	20.0%	44.5%	31.8%	23.6%
Difference	-16.4%	3.5%	12.8%	10.4%	-8.6%	-2.1%	-3.3%	7.5%	-4.2%	14.9%	-16.2%	1.4%

Attributes and Experiences

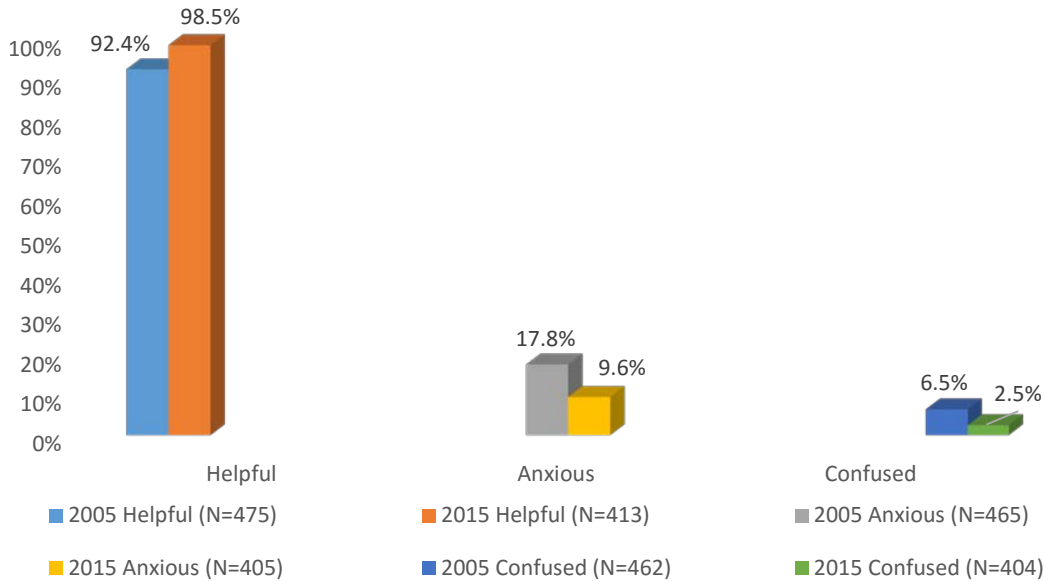
Respondents were asked to indicate how accurately a list of six adjectives described them as rostered leaders (personable, helpful, directive, anxious, confused, and goal-oriented). There were differences between the lay and clergy rosters on being directive and goal-oriented. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3: Self-description - Lay and Ordained Rostered Leaders (Percent Indicating True or Very True)



Similar to the results from the survey of ordained clergy, those on the lay roster today report feeling more helpful as well as less anxious and less confused than those who responded to the survey in 2005. Again, it would be reasonable to expect more confusion and anxiousness because of the downward trends in giving and membership across the church. However, this is not the case. It is not readily apparent why those on the lay roster today feel more helpful or why fewer feel confused or anxious. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4: Self-description among the lay roster (Percent indicating true or very true.)



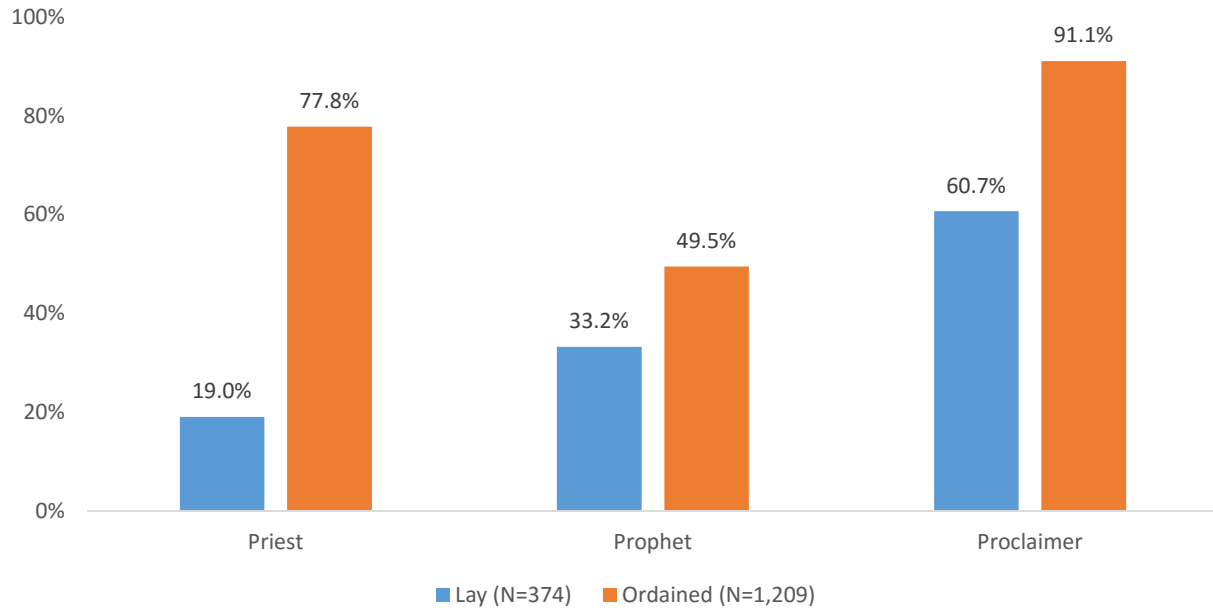
Respondents were also asked to describe their roles as rostered leaders. The items included: teacher, priest, prophet, community organizer, nurturer, servant, counselor, administrator, proclaimer and leader. The three roles that lay rostered leaders felt they embodied the most were leader, servant and teacher. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Lay Roster Roles (Percent Indicating True or Very True)

Role	Percent (N=408)
Leader	91.9%
Servant	88.7%
Teacher	86.8%

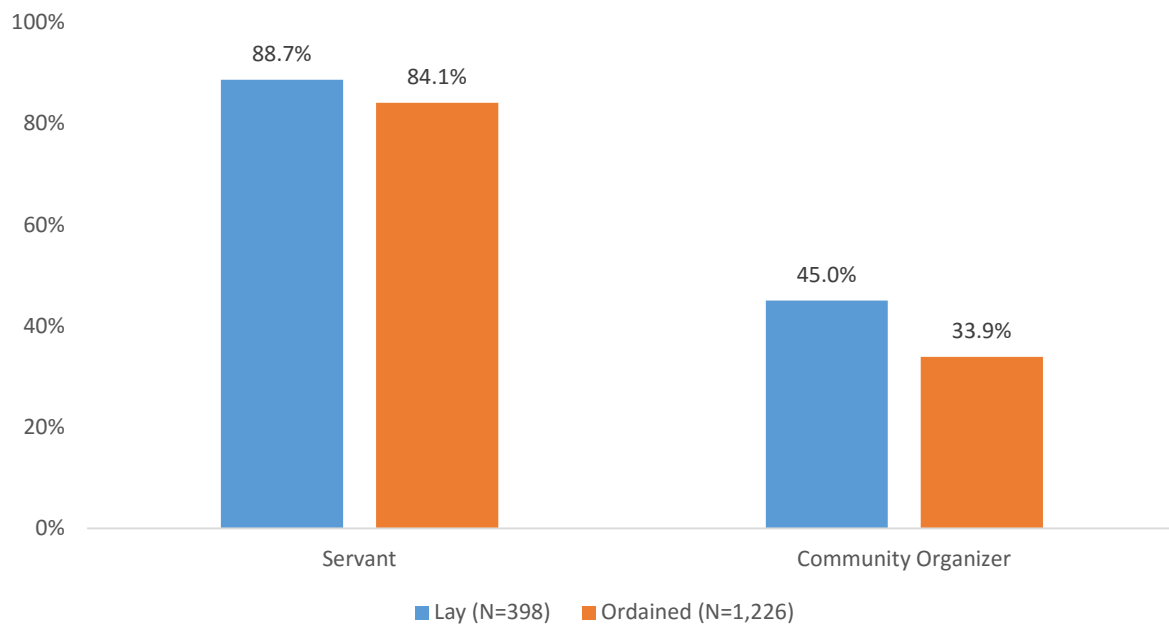
There were three roles—priest, prophet and proclaimer—where clergy were significantly more likely than lay rostered respondents to feel it represented their roles as rostered leaders. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4: Roles - Lay and Ordained Rostered Leaders (Percent Indicating True or Very True)



For two roles—community organizer and servant—lay rostered leaders were significantly more likely than ordained clergy to indicate it represented their roles. (See Figure 5.)

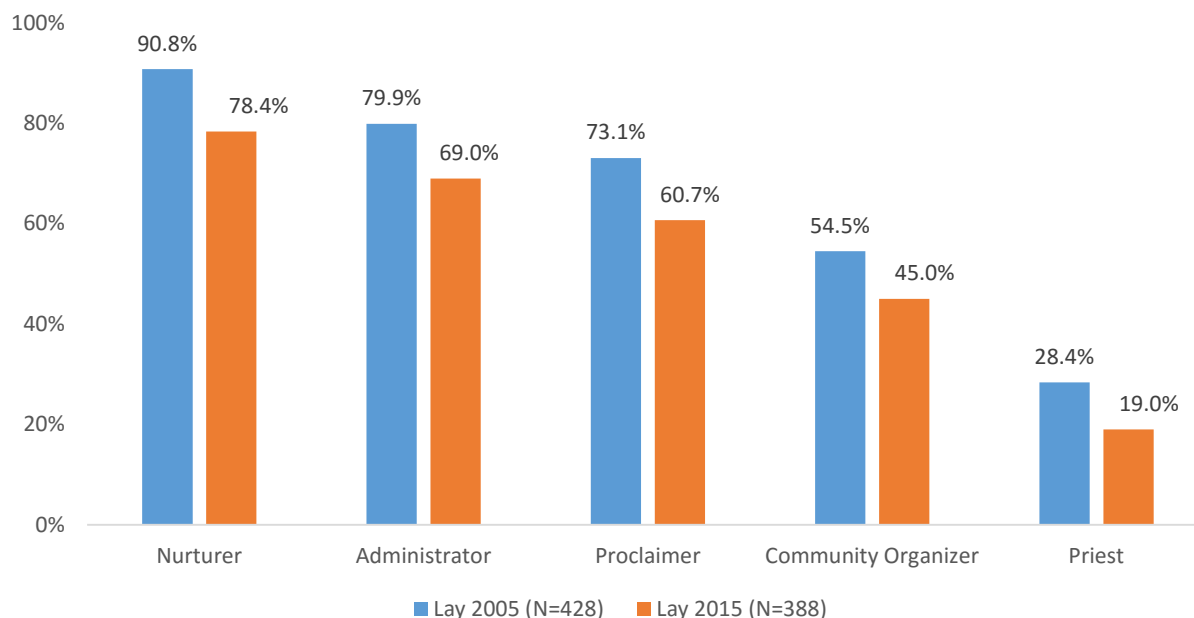
Figure 5: Roles - Lay and Ordained Rostered Leaders (Percent Indicating True or Very True)



It would make sense that more ordained clergy perceive their role as that of priest, prophet and proclaimer since their ministry is Word and Sacrament. Leader, servant and teacher are high for both groups even though servant is significantly higher for the lay roster. Community organizer is notable because the lay roster is overwhelmingly white and female. When comparing the lay roster with white female ordained clergy, the lay roster respondents are much more likely to feel community organizer describes their role. Their perception of their role as community organizers is more similar to ethnic-specific ordained clergy.

There also have been changes over the past decade in how respondents on the lay roster describe their roles as rostered leaders. Fewer see themselves as nurturers, proclaimers, administrators, priests or community organizers. It seems that respondents on the lay roster, in general, took a broader view of their roles in their ministry contexts in 2005.

Figure 6: Roles - Differences between 2005 and 2015 (Percent Indicating True or Very True)



Respondents were asked how they understood success for themselves in their ministry by indicating how important nine items were when they personally assessed their ministry. The top three activities/concepts were equally as important to ordained clergy. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: Importance of Activities/Concepts in Ministry (Percent Indicating Important or Very Important)

Activity/Concept	Lay Roster (N=409)	Ordained Clergy (N=1,228)
Developing strong relationships of trust	96.4%	97.5%
Being stable and steady in providing ministry	94.9%	94.5%
Being faithful in providing ministry	94.3%	96.7%

Understandably, one skill area that clergy assessed as significantly more important was “effective preaching and worship leadership”. Seeing steady growth in membership and/or attendance was the least important for both groups; however, it was significantly less important for the lay rostered respondents. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: Importance of Activities/Concepts in Ministry (Percent Indicating Important or Very Important)

Activity/Concept	Lay Roster (N=356)	Ordained Clergy (N=1,214)
Effective preaching and worship leadership	76.4%	98.0%
Seeing steady growth in membership and/or attendance	40.9%	51.5%

On the 2005 questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose five items out of 17 that best described how they understood success for themselves in their ministry. This list was reduced to nine items for the 2015 survey. Table 4 shows lay rostered respondents’ rankings for these items.

Table 4: Ministry Assessment for the Lay Rostered

1 = Most Important 9 = Least Important	2005	2015
Developing strong relationships of trust	1	1
Being stable and steady in providing ministry	2	2
Being faithful in providing ministry	3	3
Being an innovative, creative leader in ministry	9	4
Training strong leaders	8	5
Developing a vision for mission in the community	4	6
Advocating for justice in parish and community	6	7
Effective preaching and worship leadership	5	8
Seeing steady growth in membership and/or attendance	7	9

Developing strong relationships of trust, being stable and steady in providing ministry and being faithful in providing ministry were perceived as the most important indicators for personal success in both 2005 and 2015. However, lay rostered leaders place more importance on innovation, creativity and training strong leaders today than they did ten years ago. Also, it can be seen that seeing steady growth in membership and/or attendance was not that important in 2005 and has become the least important measure of success today. This is most likely because lay rostered leaders feel there are forces outside their control that have led to declines in membership and attendance.

One item on the 45th anniversary survey that asked respondents to indicate how important it was to demonstrate a high level of skill in 16 different areas of pastoral leadership. These 16 items related to teaching, community involvement, preaching, prayer and working with different groups in their ministries.

There were five items that the ordained clergy felt were significantly more important than the lay rostered respondents. These mostly concerned teaching and working with different groups. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: Importance of Pastoral Skill Areas (Percent Indicating Important or Very Important)

Pastoral Skill Area	Lay Roster (N=379)	Ordained Clergy (N=1,203)
Encourage people to witness to others through what they do in their daily lives	90.8%	97.5%
Communicate a clear understanding of how a congregation/ministry setting is living out God's mission	84.6%	93.4%
Foster real decision making, with the power to implement resting with the congregation's lay leader/other leaders in the ministry setting	75.9%	86.0%
Provide a variety of ways for non-members to come into contact with, or learn about, the congregation/ministry setting	70.4%	81.2%
Be clear about how I use my personal money to support the mission and ministry of the church	60.5%	71.1%

The survey included questions, in four categories, about possible experiences in different church settings:

- if they had been asked questions about family or career (e.g., likelihood of having children, desire to be a senior pastor);
- if they had been asked about cooking meals or the upkeep of the building;
- if they had thought about how their attire, race/ethnicity or gender affected others' perceptions of them; and
- if they had experienced race/gender discrimination or sexual harassment.

The seven different settings are the following:

- At seminary
- During internship
- In the congregation or ministry setting
- With ELCA rostered leaders
- During the call process
- With ecumenical colleagues
- By synod and/or churchwide staff

Because the sample size of men (N=78) who responded is low, it is difficult to gauge significance when comparing men with women (N=338). However, there are experiences where the differences between men and women are clear, and these have to do with experiences specifically related to gender.

I feel as if I represent my gender in what I say or do. (See Table 5.) The largest differences were with ecumenical colleagues and in the congregation or ministry setting (18% each). Yet, the differences between genders on the lay roster are not as extreme as the differences for ordained clergy. There was a 38 percent difference between ordained women and men with ecumenical colleagues (58% female/20% male), and 37 percent difference between ordained women and men in the congregation or ministry setting (74% female/37% male). (See 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Clergy Questionnaire Report.)

Table 5: I have felt as if I represent my gender in what I say or do.

	At Seminary	During Internship	In the Congregation or Ministry Setting	With ELCA Rostered Leaders	During the Call Process	With Ecumenical Colleagues	By Synod and/or Churchwide Staff	Never had this experience
Females (N=338)	25.7%	16.3%	52.7%	36.4%	25.4%	32.5%	22.8%	29.9%
Males (N=78)	14.1%	3.8%	34.6%	19.2%	11.5%	14.1%	14.1%	56.4%
Difference	11.6%	12.5%	18.1%	17.2%	13.9%	18.4%	8.7%	-26.5%

I have thought about how my gender affects how people perceive me. (See Table 6.) The largest difference is with ELCA rostered leaders (18%). Again, the difference is less than the difference between male and female ordained clergy (27% difference - 57% female/30% male). The greatest difference for ordained men and women was in the internship setting (41% difference – 69% female/28% male). The lower percentage for the lay roster in the internship setting could be attributed to the fact that associates in ministry are not always required to have an internship. (See 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Clergy Questionnaire Report.)

Table 6: I have thought about how my gender affects how people perceive me.

	At Seminary	During Internship	In the Congregation or Ministry Setting	With ELCA Rostered Leaders	During the Call Process	With Ecumenical Colleagues	By Synod and/or Churchwide Staff	Never had this experience
Females (N=338)	23.4%	18.7%	64.2%	39.9%	27.2%	34.6	30.8%	22.5%
Males (N=78)	21.8%	7.7%	51.3%	21.8%	16.7%	19.2%	16.7%	41.0%
Difference	1.6%	9.0%	12.9%	18.1%	10.5%	15.4%	14.1%	-18.5%

I have experienced gender-based discrimination. (See Table 7.) The largest difference is in the congregation or ministry setting (27%). And again, the difference is less than the difference between ordained female and male clergy (45% difference - 57% female/12%male).

Table 7: I have experienced gender-based discrimination.

	At Seminary	During Internship	In the Congregation or Ministry Setting	With ELCA Rostered Leaders	During the Call Process	With Ecumenical Colleagues	By Synod and/or Churchwide Staff	Never had this experience
Females (N=338)	7.1%	7.1%	37.0%	15.7%	8.3%	13.6%	9.5%	51.2%
Males (N=78)	6.4%	1.3%	10.3%	9.0%	3.8%	6.4%	5.1%	80.8%
Difference	0.7%	5.8%	26.7%	6.7%	4.5%	7.2%	4.4%	-29.6%

Respondents were asked if they had taken actions in the last year related to inclusive language and if they had taken these actions, how they were received in their congregation or ministry setting. The three most common actions are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Actions Related to Inclusive Language

	Lay Roster (N=416)	Ordained Clergy (N=1243)
Increased the use of gender-neutral language/imagery in preaching or in other examples.	70%	76%
Decreased the use of masculine language/imagery in preaching or in other examples.	65%	77%
Advocated among congregational leaders/leaders in the ministry setting for the use of inclusive language.	54%	58%

Ordained clergy are somewhat more likely to have taken these actions. Also, rostered lay men are more likely than women on the lay roster to have taken these actions. The number of lay rostered men who responded is low (N=78) and therefore, difficult to assess significance. However, 80 percent have increased the use of feminine language/imagery in preaching or other examples; 77 percent have decreased the use of masculine language/imagery in preaching or in other examples; 64 percent advocated among congregational leaders/leaders in the ministry setting for the use of inclusive language.

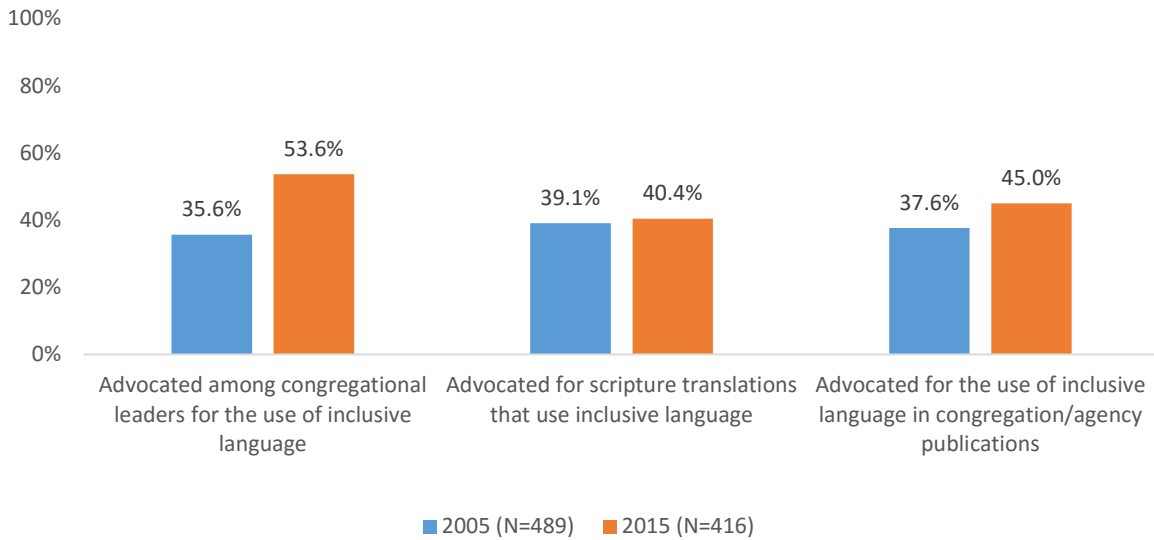
In terms of how inclusive or gender-neutral language was received in the congregation or ministry setting, there is very little difference between the lay roster and ordained clergy.

Table 9: How were these actions received in your congregation or ministry setting? (Percent indicating "Very Well")

	Lay Roster (N=416)	Ordained Clergy (N=1243)
Increased the use of gender-neutral language/imagery in preaching or in other examples.	59%	60%
Decreased the use of masculine language/imagery in preaching or in other examples.	60%	62%
Advocated among congregational leaders/leaders in the ministry setting for the use of inclusive language.	39%	34%

More lay rostered leaders are advocating for inclusive language in 2015 than in 2005. This is especially true for advocating for inclusive language with congregational leaders. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7: Use of Inclusive Language in 2005 and 2015



The respondents were asked if their experiences in seminary prepared them well for their first call. The responses were quite similar to the white female ordained clergy. This is understandable since 98 percent of the lay roster is white and 81 percent are women.

Table 10: My experiences in seminary prepared me well for my first call.

	Strongly disagree to disagree	Agree to strongly agree
Lay Roster (N=294)	23.5%	76.5%
White Females Ordained (N=536)	23.9%	76.1%

The amount of debt owed by respondents on the lay roster is significantly less than their ordained female colleagues. (See Figure 6.) This is due to the amount of debt that ordained clergy must accrue as part of their M.Div. requirements, and the fact that more of the ordained male respondents completed seminary when educational costs were less prohibitive (See 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Clergy Questionnaire Report.) The debt decreases as those on the lay roster continue their careers. Eighty-six percent of the lay roster respondents owed less than \$15,000 in educational debt in 2015.

Figure 8: Educational Debt at Seminary Graduation

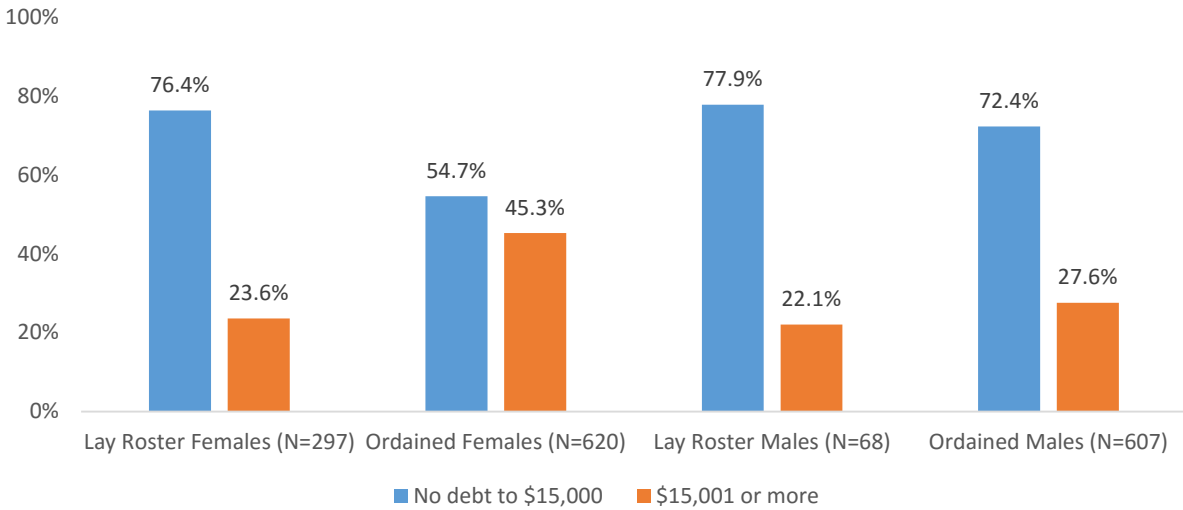
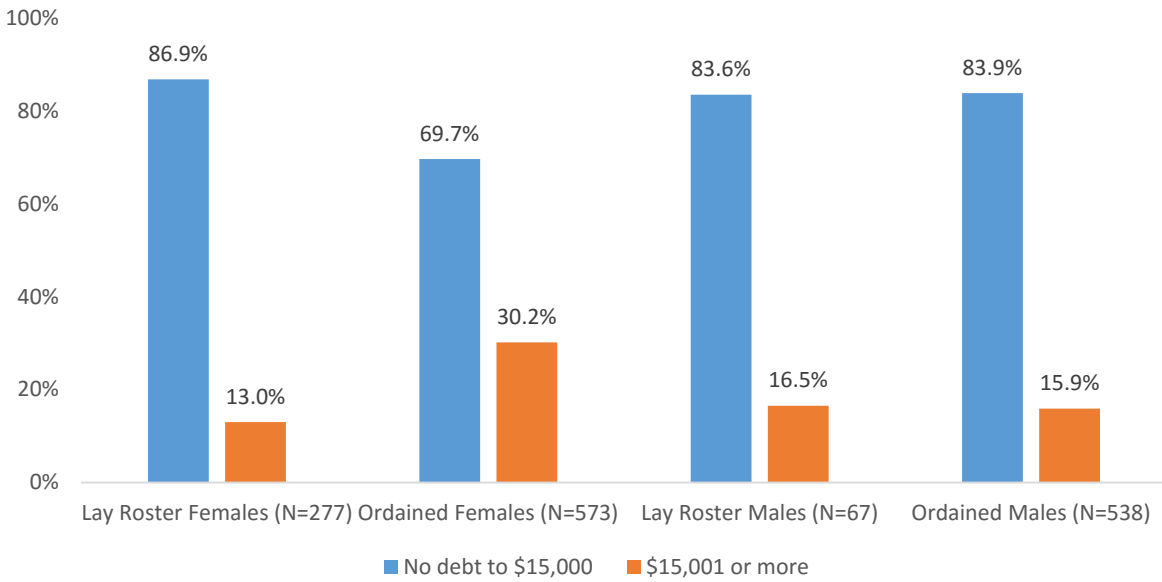


Figure 8: Educational Debt in 2015²



² No educational debt in 2015: Lay Roster Females – 76%, Ordained Females – 58%, Lay Roster Males – 76%, Ordained Males – 74%.