



Candidacy is the churchwide process of discernment and accompaniment leading to serve as a rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Minister of Word and Service. Any baptized person who senses a call to serve on a roster of the ELCA must complete this form to begin the process toward candidacy. People seeking rostering who are previously ordained in another Lutheran Church or another Christian tradition must also complete the Application to the Roster of Ordained Ministers - persons ordained in another Lutheran church or from another Christian tradition (OTTR). Persons seeking reinstatement must also complete the Reinstatement form.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

SYNOD IN WHICH YOU ARE A CANDIDATE

LAST 4 OF SS#

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

M.I

LAST NAME AT BIRTH (IF DIFFERENT)

SUFFIX

TITLE

Pronouns

FULL NAME

Address:

ADDRESS LINE I

ADDRESS LINE II

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

GENDER

BIRTHDATE

BIRTHPLACE

BAPTISM DATE

CONGREGATION

LOCATION

CITIZENSHIP

ARE YOU LEGALLY ENTITLED TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES?
(YES/NO)

NATIVE LANGUAGE

ETHNIC ORIGIN

Other Languages

☐ Read ☐ Write ☐ Conversation ☐ Translate

☐ Read ☐ Write ☐ Conversation ☐ Translate

☐ Read ☐ Write ☐ Conversation ☐ Translate

Do you use Braille to read? YES NO

ELCA CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

CONGREGATION NAME

CONGREGATION NUMBER

MEMBER SINCE

CITY, STATE, ZIP

PASTOR

SYNOD



FAMILY INFORMATION

SINGLE/ MARRIED

IN PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE, LIFELONG, MONOGAMOUS, SAME-GENDER RELATIONSHIP

BY CIVIL MARRIAGE

BY CIVIL UNION

BY OTHER MEANS

DATE

BIRTHDATE

FIRST NAME

MIDDLE

LAST NAME

LAST NAME AT BIRTH (if different)

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION :

EDUCATION AND PROFESSION:

Rostered in the ELCA?

IN CANDIDACY FOR ELCA ROSTERED MINISTRY?

CHILD NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

LIVE WITH YOU?

CHILD NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

LIVE WITH YOU?

CHILD NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

LIVE WITH YOU?

CHILD NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

LIVE WITH YOU?

CHILD NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

LIVE WITH YOU?

Prev. Spouse(s):

NAME

DATE OF BEG.

END DATE

RELATIONSHIP ENDED BY

NAME

DATE OF BEG.

END DATE

RELATIONSHIP ENDED BY

Prev. Partner(s) in a civil union or other same-gender relationship that was held out as publicly accountable, lifelong, and monogamous:

NAME

DATE OF MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE END DATE

MARRIAGE ENDED BY

NAME

DATE OF MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE END DATE

MARRIAGE ENDED BY

If you have more than two previous spouses or previous partners check here _____
and give details in a letter to the Candidacy Committee.



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

College:

NAME	MAJOR/ STUDIES	YEAR (FROM/TO)
DEGREE	CITY, STATE	

College:

NAME	MAJOR/ STUDIES	YEAR (FROM/TO)
DEGREE	CITY, STATE	
A SEMINARYSTUDYCODE		

Seminary:

NAME	MAJOR/ STUDIES	YEAR (FROM/TO)
DEGREE	CITY, STATE	

Graduate School:

NAME	MAJOR/ STUDIES	YEAR (FROM/TO)
DEGREE	CITY, STATE	

Other Education:

NAME	MAJOR/ STUDIES	YEAR (FROM/TO)
DEGREE	CITY, STATE	



Areas in which you have completed coursework:

Old Testament	<hr/>	Lutheran Confessions	<hr/>
	BACHELOR/GRADUATE		BACHELOR/GRADUATE
New Testament	<hr/>	Lutheran Heritage	<hr/>
	BACHELOR/GRADUATE		BACHELOR/GRADUATE
Christian Theology	<hr/>	Church and Culture	<hr/>
	BACHELOR/GRADUATE		BACHELOR/GRADUATE

WORK HISTORY (Please list most recent position first, including any military service)

EMPLOYER	POSITION/TITLE	YEAR (FROM /TO)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CITY, STATE	PHONE	
<hr/>	<hr/>	
EMPLOYER	POSITION/TITLE	YEAR (FROM /TO)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CITY, STATE	PHONE	
<hr/>	<hr/>	
EMPLOYER	POSITION/TITLE	YEAR (FROM /TO)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CITY, STATE	PHONE	
<hr/>	<hr/>	
EMPLOYER	POSITION/TITLE	YEAR (FROM /TO)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CITY, STATE	PHONE	
<hr/>	<hr/>	
EMPLOYER	POSITION/TITLE	YEAR (FROM /TO)
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
CITY, STATE	PHONE	
<hr/>	<hr/>	

Given the work history listed above, will this be a second career?

YES/NO

Do you have professional certification or licensure in any specialization?

YES/NO



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT CHURCH EXPERIENCE:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Participated in a church youth organization | <input type="radio"/> Involved in campus ministry |
| <input type="radio"/> Served as a leader in a church youth organization | <input type="radio"/> Attended a church or Bible camp |
| <input type="radio"/> Attended a national, regional or synod youth gathering | <input type="radio"/> Worked on the staff of a church or Bible camp as a counselor or staff member. |

Ministry Preferences:

ROSTERED ELCA?	ROSTER OF PRIMARY INTEREST:	ROUTE
SEMINARY OF INTEREST:		
Seminary Name	CITY, STATE	ANTICIPATED ENTRY DATE
IF NON-ELCA SEMINARY, WITH WHICH ELCA SEMINARY DO YOU PLAN TO AFFILIATE?		
HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR OR PARTICIPATED IN THE ELCA CANDIDACY PROCESS?		
<div>YES/NO</div>		
IF SO, ARE YOU APPLYING FOR REINSTATEMENT?		
<div>YES/NO</div>		
ELCA SYNOD OF PREVIOUS CANDIDACY		
Outcome:	Year?	

CANDIDACY QUESTIONS

"As a candidate for rostered ministry in this church, I understand I will be held accountable to the synod's candidacy committee regarding this church's expectations for my speech and conduct as set forward in Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers. I understand that my candidacy for rostered ministry brings increased attention to my life. I am responsible for informing my bishop regarding any circumstance that might subject me to discipline according to Definitions and Guidelines were I a rostered minister. I understand that the candidacy committee may modify my candidacy status in response to my speech and conduct."

1. Do you belong to any organization or lodge like the Free Masons or Eastern Star which claim to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church?
2. Have you completed your on-line personal health assessment?
2a. What did you learn, and what will you do to remain healthy?
3. Do you have or have had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as a rostered minister in the ELCA?
4. Are there issues in your family situation or personal life that could adversely affect your ability to serve as rostered minister in the ELCA?
5. Is your personal debt, excluding mortgage, greater than \$50,000?
6. Have you ever defaulted on a loan or declared bankruptcy?
7. Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions?
8. Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical, or other improper behavior?



9. Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license?

10. Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?

11. Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?

12. Have you engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to continue in candidacy for rostered ministry?

13. Are you prepared to accept a call from this church based on the needs of the church which might require service in a location different from where you now live?

14. Is there additional information that would assist the Candidacy Committee in considering your candidacy or that you believe the committee should know?

☐ I state that the above information is true and correct. I hereby apply for entrance into the process for candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Authorization and Release

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's candidacy process for individuals preparing for rostered ministry is a partnership among candidates, seminaries, synods, and the ELCA. The process requires that candidate information may be shared among these partners. Every applicant for candidacy must give permission for the necessary exchange of information related to the candidacy process.

I authorize any references, supervisors, ELCA agencies, congregations, or any other person or organization to give any information, including opinions, regarding my charter and fitness for ministry to my synod Candidacy Committee of _____. I further authorize my synod Candidacy Committee to release to ELCA candidacy partners (seminary dean or faculty, ELCA, Christian Community and Leadership) copies of any documents in my candidate file that are necessary to my candidacy process.

I also release any individual, employer, church ELCA agency or office, reference, or any other person or organization providing information from any and all liability for damage of whatever kind or nature that may exist at any time on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

A facsimile or photocopy of this authorization shall be as valid as the original.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME

* Electronically submitted on:

DATE



ELCA Candidacy – Entrance Essay

Entrance Introduction

"The Entrance process in candidacy is the first formal discernment by a candidacy committee and applicants of their readiness for candidacy. A decision to grant Entrance officially accepts an applicant into candidacy."¹

The Entrance essay is an autobiographical reflection that should contain insights and understanding gained during the period of discernment that led you to apply for candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Your process of discernment need not be completed; we ask only that you provide an honest assessment of your journey thus far as you understand it, and your hope for the future. This will provide the committee with background information to guide your interview.

To prepare and write your essay:

- Read:
 - The following chapters of "Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA" (www.elca.org/constitution): Chapter 2, "Confession of Faith"; Chapter 4, "Statement of Purpose"; and Chapter 7, "Ministry."
 - "About the ELCA" on the church's website (www.elca.org/about).
- Review:
 - "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline: Rostered Ministers, Congregations, and Members of Congregations" (resources.elca.org/office-of-the-secretary/definitions-and-guidelines-for-discipline-2021/).
 - The Wholeness Wheel from Portico Benefit Services (porticobenefits.org/the-wholeness-wheel/).

Entrance Components

Contact your synod's candidacy committee for details about the components for Entrance:

- Active membership in an ELCA worshipping community or campus ministry for at least one year. A community leader will submit the Congregational Registration Form (Communal Discernment).
- Candidacy Application form.
- Entrance essay.
- Personal financial worksheet.
- Personal health assessment.
- Letters of reference.
- Transcripts, licenses and certificates of completion for continuing education.

¹ ELCA Candidacy Manual, Adopted by the Church Council November 2016, revised January 2023, 35.



- Application fees, if applicable.
- Initial interviews, if applicable.
- Psychological evaluation.
- Background checks (criminal, financial and motor vehicle).
- Consent form to release student information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Any other materials requested for review by the candidacy committee.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The ELCA Electronic Communications Procedures provide guidance for using artificial intelligence (AI) within the ELCA churchwide organization. This is adapted for our use in considering AI in candidacy materials.

"The ELCA recognizes the benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing its mission, ministry and operations. However, it acknowledges the risks and ethical, environmental and theological considerations associated with AI, including issues related to bias, privacy, security and transparency. In all potential uses of AI, the organization and individuals must keep human dignity in mind and support the ELCA's social teachings. As such, the ELCA is committed to ensuring the responsible, human-centered and ethical use of AI." Later we read, "Using AI for 'creative' purposes likely involves AI incorporating copyrighted material and presenting it as its own 'creation'"²

In ministry settings, and as an issue of personal character, theological honesty and integrity of formation artifacts, using AI programs requires intentionality and transparency. AI may be used appropriately as a proofing aid (i.e., to check only spelling and basic grammar). If AI-generated content appears in an essay or artifact, it must be cited as if it were any other resource, e.g., with attribution and a link to the conversation. AI-generated content that is not cited will be treated as plagiarized.³

Entrance Essay Instructions

For each of the five parts, write two to three pages, double-spaced (500-750 words). Each page should include a header or footer with your name and the page number.

Answer each of the numbered questions. Questions that begin with bullet points are sub-questions that should be addressed in your response. All essays should include the question number and/or prompt to which they respond.

Submit a copy of the essay to your candidacy committee through your synod office.

Keep a copy of the essay for yourself and bring it with you to your Entrance Interview.

² ELCA Electronic Communications Procedures, January 2025.

³ Wartburg Theological Seminary Student Handbook, 2024.



Entrance Essay Questions

1. Provide a brief autobiography that includes your early years, faith formation and current life situation.
2. Describe your relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. Describe your journey of discernment.
 - How did you first experience your call to rostered ministry?
 - What have you done to deepen this understanding?
 - Who have you discussed this with?
 - Through this intentional time of discernment, what have you learned about yourself, the church and the world?
4. What plans do you have for formation for rostered leadership, including theological education?
5. Consider all areas of the Wholeness Wheel (porticobenefits.org/the-wholeness-wheel/). What steps have you taken or do you still need to take to be a healthy leader? What types of support might you need as you pursue that health and wholeness?