



ENDORSEMENT ESSAY

MAY 2020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear candidate for rostered ministry:

The positive Entrance decision you received some time ago recognized you as a baptized person with gifts and potential for rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The candidacy committee of your synod expressed confidence in your ability to begin preparation and formation for public ministry through theological study and personal growth and development. You are now ready to be considered for Endorsement, the next step in the ELCA candidacy process.

Endorsement provides an opportunity to assess progress and review your development in your preparation for ministry. The ongoing discernment of your call has been a focus since your entrance decision was made. The areas of development to be addressed are:

- Personal and interpersonal skills for ministry
- Educational and theological ability
- Spiritual formation and faith
- Understanding of call to ministry

As you declare the particular office of ministry to which you feel called (Word and Sacrament, Word and Service), you are asked to reflect on your identity in light of that call. A positive Endorsement decision by your candidacy committee confers candidacy for that specific rostered ministry in the ELCA.

We welcome you to this next step in candidacy and pray that God's Spirit will guide you in this time of reflection and assessment.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Cherlyne V. Beck, Director for Leadership and Candidacy
Ms. Sandra Mejia-Vega, Program Director for Candidacy Data and Resource Development
and your partners in the Domestic Mission unit

Endorsement Essay

From Candidacy Manual:

At Endorsement a candidacy committee and its seminary partners affirm:

- a candidate's continued discernment of a call to, and gifts and skills for, a specific rostered ministry, and
- mutual discernment among the candidacy committee, seminary faculty and candidate of readiness to complete candidacy successfully.

The time between Entrance and Endorsement will vary in length due to the variety of curricular approaches and timelines used by different seminaries and the candidate's own rate of progress. This is normally an opportunity for theological study, ongoing spiritual formation, personal growth, and continuing discernment and clarification of call. Topics that will be addressed during this period include:

1. the candidate's articulation of God's mission in the world and missional leadership,
2. the candidate's understanding of a call to a specific roster or to some other form of service,
3. personal spiritual growth and faith commitment,
4. educational and theological wisdom, and
5. personal and interpersonal skills.

Directions:

As you prepare to write the essay, please:

- Read chapters 1,4, & 7 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions: "Confession of Faith", "Statement of Purpose", and "Ministry". (www.elca.org/constitution).
- Review the Wholeness Wheel. (<https://www.porticobenefits.org/CallToLiveWell/FaithBasedWellBeing/TheWholenessWheel>)
- Incorporate your learning and any formative experiences since entrance.
- In general, answer each question **in a single, double-spaced** page, although some responses may be slightly shorter or slightly longer.
- Note that the entire Endorsement essay should be no more than **ten numbered, double-spaced pages with your name and question at the top of each page**.
- Submit one copy-ready essay to your candidacy committee (in care of the synod office) and one copy to your ELCA seminary, if applicable. **The essay is due September 1 for the fall Endorsement schedule** or an optional date set by your candidacy committee.
- Bring a copy of the essay with you to your Endorsement interview

Endorsement Essay Questions

1. How has your relationship with Jesus Christ changed over the past year?
2. How has your own understanding of call deepened since your positive Entrance decision?
3. Which passage of Scripture resonates with your own faith journey, and why?
4. Describe one new theological understanding you have discovered as you have made your way through seminary and candidacy.
5. What do you find distinctive about the Lutheran understanding of God's mission in the world, and why?
6. How will the distinctiveness you described in the previous question inform and shape your leadership in ministry?
7. What aspect of the ELCA do you feel particularly connected to, and why?
8. Reflect upon someone who has mentored you, the impact they have had on your own formation and the way it informs the impact you seek to have on others.
9. Please state the roster on which you seek to serve. How will serving on this roster help you live into being the leader whom you believe God has called you to be?
10. Identify one section of the Wholeness Wheel and share the growth that has already happened to you and what is hoped for in the future.