Reimagining Candidacy Hearing
Candidacy and Leadership Working Group Initial Proposal
January 2024
Agenda

• How did we get here
• Why reimagine candidacy now
• What have we done so far
• What we have learned
• Design Criteria
• Proposed Process
  • Core Competencies
  • Formation
  • Process
  • Partnerships: roles & responsibilities
• Next Steps
Questions to wonder about...

1. What resonates with you?
2. What do you need more information about?
3. What else do you want to share?
How did we get here?

Anecdotes from around the church:
• Not enough Rostered Ministers
• Some rostered leaders lack a basic understanding of Lutheran theology
• The process is complicated
• Not enough discernment leading to issues down the road
• Not using research to understand the changing needs of the church and the candidates
• “-isms” entrenched: uneven preference for white, male, straight candidates
Candidacy
Leadership
Development
Working Group


NOT PICTURED: Javier Goitia, Christopher deForest, David Anglada
Our vision is to recommend a process for candidacy that forms and supports rostered ministers for the current and future church.

Updates: elca.org/formation
What have we done so far?

Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG)
- Launched in March 2022
- 12/13-member team, various stakeholders
  - Bishops, Church Council Members, CW Staff, Synod Staff, Layperson(s), Deacons, Pastors, former and current candidacy committee members
  - Latino, Black, Indigenous, White, geographically dispersed, LGBTQ, married, single, variety of ages, TEEM, MDiv
• Listening Sessions: more than 800 responses
• Survey to excluded communities: more than 300 responses
• Research with ecumenical partners
• Tried a few things that ended quickly
• Currently finalizing what Rostered Ministers need to Be, Know, and Do
• Developing prototypes for the candidacy process to match the needs of current and future church
What We Have Learned: Challenges & Pain Points

- Changing needs of the world and ELCA ministries
- Process designed for a candidate that is no longer universal
- Current process is too complicated
- Inconsistency across the church
- Lack of objectivity
- Lack of clarity around roles
- Need for more discernment prior to formal candidacy process
Why Reimagine Candidacy?

The candidacy process is the organized institutional form by which the ELCA serves its mission by preparing the people of God in a variety of forms of leadership to serve the Church and the world.

Its primary task is to identify, form, and equip the people of God for leading ministries of Word and Service and Word and Sacrament through ordination and increasingly for the authorizing of lay leaders by synods.

This formation process needs to attend to the needs of the church, both current and future, as well as the gifts and abilities of those called to serve, understanding that calls are both external and internal.
Design Criteria

• Grounded in our call to bear witness to the Triune God.
• Agile and responsive to the changing needs of the church and our candidates.
• Accompany candidates through a clear, understandable, and flexible discernment and formation process.
• The desired outcomes and competencies of the candidacy process will be clearly articulated and transparent.
• The roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the candidacy process will be distinct and explicit.
• Take seriously the importance of discernment before entering candidacy, as well as during candidacy.
The View From 10,000 Feet
Each category will hold a variety of competencies. Each competency will be defined by a rubric describing the successful formation of that competency.

*Successful completion will be assessed differently for Rostered Ministers and Authorized Lay Ministers.*
Theology and Bible

Critical engagement with the Biblical Story

Articulate the Gospel

Lutheran/Confessions connected to today’s world

History of Christianity, including Reformation History

Understanding of Triune God across time and place

The Church’s Call to the World/Missional Ecclesiology

Applied Ethics
Theoretical

- Systems Theory
- Psychology & Sociology
- Reading Contexts & Cultural Awareness
- Adaptive Leadership & Leading in Complexity
- Mediating and Leading in Conflict
Cultural Context

- Outward focused orientation
- Cultural Humility and Intelligence (Theory)
- Read Context (micro and macro) and Contextualize
- Bias/Anti-racism
- Engages Difference/Diversity
Ministerial Leadership

Roster and area of specialization may impact these competency expectations

- Preaching and Worship Leadership
- Teaching and Faith Formation
- Caring Ministry and Cultivating Christian Community
- Evangelism
- Community Engaging, Service, Justice
- Stewardship and Financial Leadership
- Non-profit Leadership and Administration
- Discernment practices
Personal & Interpersonal Emotional Intelligence

Interpersonal Capacities

Cultural Humility (lived expression)

Healthy Boundaries

Self-Care and Self-Awareness around Wholeness Wheel

Personal Faith/Engaged in Faith Practices
Competency Rubric Example Theology/Bible

Critical engagement with the Biblical Story - part 1 - comprehension and analysis
   a. Understands what a text says and can summarize the text. Identifies basic features of a text in response to assigned prompts.
   b. Demonstrates the ability to read texts with purpose, choosing appropriate reading strategies depending on features of the text or genre.
   c. Integrates the text with general contextual knowledge (history, culture, author, etc.) to draw more complex conclusions about a text’s message.
   d. Synthesizes textual and contextual aspects of the text with critical perspectives (secondary sources and critical tools) to go beyond a text’s explicit message and recognize broader issues.

Critical engagement with the Biblical Story - part 2 - interpretation and imagination
   a. Uses critical tools and secondary sources as assigned; identifies basic aspects of a text in response to instructor prompts.
      Approaches text with the intention of proving the right answer.
   b. Demonstrates the ability to read texts with purpose, choosing appropriate reading strategies depending on features of the text or genre. Engages the text in ways that inform how the contemporary world is viewed and understood.
   c. Uses critical tools and secondary sources independently, with an awareness of a text’s surplus of meanings. Is able to explore new questions, encounter diverse perspectives, and enhance discussions with others.
   d. Uses a variety critical tools in order to read the Scriptures in all of their complexity and promise. Understands the ways the Scriptures have been interpreted over the centuries and in various contexts. Discovers new readings from diverse communities that enrich imagination and help people reimagine life and faith in light of God’s word.
Formation Components

Word and Sacrament
- MDiv
- Certificate/Non-Degree
- Customized

Word and Service
- MDiv/MA
- Certificate/Non-Degree
- Customized

Authorized Lay Ministry (SAM, SAL, PMA)
- Lay School
- Certificate/Non-Degree
- Customized

Candidacy Retreats (Relationship Building & Personal and Interpersonal Formation)

Clinical Pastoral Education (norm)

Alternative CPE experience

Contextual Learning
- “Traditional” Internship
- In context (TEEM-like)
- Residency

Contextual Learning typically in context

Discernment
Candidacy Process

Rostered Ministers

1. Discernment
2. Synod Entrance
3. Seminary Endorsement
4. Regional Approval
5. First Call

Certified Lay Ministers

1. Discernment
2. Synod Entrance
3. Synod Approval
Discernment is a standard process prior to candidacy.

- Recognize spiritual gifts
- Opportunities to serve
- Core Competencies are shared
- Discernment Essay – begins the Candidacy Portfolio
Applicant may make recommendations for an Accompanier (chosen and assigned by the synod)
Application materials are submitted (psych assessment, background check, etc.)
Competency Assessment
Meet with Synod Entrance Committee
Formation Plan is created
Seminary Endorsement

- Check in with Synod to determine readiness for Endorsement (based on competencies)
- Competency Assessment
- Meet Seminary Endorsement Panel
- Review/Update Formation Plan
• Check in with Synod to determine readiness for approval (based on competencies)
• Apply for approval (Rostered Ministers Profile is the approval application) Submit final portfolio
• Submit final portfolio
• Meet with the Regional Approval Committee
• Candidates are available for First Call
• Expectation of ongoing formation after ordination
• Synod remains responsible through first call
Synod Candidacy Team

- Bishop
- Assistant to the Bishop (if applicable)
- Entrance Committee Members (3-5)
- Regional Approval Representatives (2)
- Accompaniers (come and go with specific candidates)

- Provides leadership for discernment opportunities/events
- Supports and attends annual candidacy retreat
- Accompanier: Attends interviews, candidate retreats, and checks in quarterly (not an assessor)
- Entrance Committee: Interviews candidate (readiness to begin) and creates competency plan with the candidate and synod staff.
- Regional Approval Representatives: Participate in regional approval interviews
Synod Bishop and/or A2B

- Meet with folks discerning prior to their applying
- Work with region candidacy teams to facilitate discernment opportunities/events
- Match applicants with Accompanier
- Participate in Entrance Interview and oversee initial competency assessment
- Works with candidacy team to plan annual candidacy retreat
- Tracks all application and portfolio materials
- Supports seminaries with contextual learning placement
- Affirms candidate’s readiness for approval
- Attends and participates in the Regional Approval Interviews
- Activates RMP after First Call Conversation
Region
(Candidacy and Leadership Managers)

- Support regional discernment opportunities & events
- New Candidate Orientation
- Provide training for and support Entrance Committee Members
- Provide training for Accompagniers
- Provide training for and support Bishops and A2B
- Participates in Entrance Interviews and Competency Plan conversations as needed
- Support annual candidacy retreats
- Train the regional approval committee
- Facilitate the Regional Approval Process (participate in interviews as needed)
Seminaries

- Support discernment opportunities & programs (share about seminary programs, competencies, etc.)
- Receives application from the candidate for a program of study
- Provide coursework, contextual education placement
- Responsible for Seminary Endorsement (Competency Assessment) and communicating w/synod
- Submit conferred degree to synod
Churchwide

- Develop discernment resources/programs, provide training for those shepherding the discernment programs, offer national opportunities
- Creates and maintains a uniform application process
- Receives and acts on requests for synod transfer
- Develop standardized seminary endorsement options
- Develop training for the regional approval process
Candidacy Reimagined: Accompaniment, Accountability and Assessment of Applicants and Candidates

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<th>SEMINARY</th>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>CHURCHWIDE</th>
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<td>Candidacy Onboarding</td>
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<td>staff &amp; committee)</td>
<td>First Call Overview</td>
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<td>Assigned mentor/accompanier/coach</td>
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<td>Contextual Placement/Learning</td>
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*BOLD indicates who has the primary role and responsibility*
Candidacy and Leadership Development Working Group

Working Timeline to enhance our ability to share the gospel.

**November 2023 – January 2024**
Share the draft of the “process” which will include our consensus about the purpose of Candidacy Process, Importance of Discernment, Core Competencies, Paths for Ministry, Responsibilities for Accountability and Accompaniment with stakeholders for feedback.

**March 27, 2024 - Conference of Bishops Meeting for review**
2nd draft of “process” based on feedback on above, ready to submit to Church council

**Spring 2024 – Church Council**
Share 2nd draft of “process” as well as possible constitutional changes

**Fall 2024 – Conference of Bishops Meeting**
Draft of candidacy manual for their review

**Fall 2024 – Church Council meeting**
Draft of candidacy manual for their review
Suggested constitutional changes to be recommended to churchwide assembly

**Spring 2025 – Conference of Bishops Meeting**
Final draft of candidacy manual

**Spring 2025 – Church Council**
Final draft of candidacy manual (approval based upon adoption of constitutional amendments)

**August 2025 – Churchwide Assembly**
Approval of any needed constitutional amendments
Curious Questions

• Much more work to do in the details
• Opportunity to respond in a google form (QR Code)

https://forms.gle/6b3VBZx9oB11yTp99