



ENDORSEMENT ESSAY

MAY 2024



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 reflects the committee's confidence in your formation and growth.

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. Martha Hampton, Director, Candidacy and First Call

Ms. Cynthia Zamora, Program Manager, First Call Process and Candidacy

Ms. Sandra Mejia-Vega, Program Manager, Candidacy Data and Resource Development

and your partners in the Christian Community and Leadership home area

Directions: As you prepare to write the essay, please:

- Read chapters 2, 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).

Read "About the ELCA" About the ELCA - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "We are Church – We are Lutheran – We are Church Together -We are Church for the Sake of the World"

- Review the Wholeness Wheel.
- Incorporate your learning and any formative experiences since entrance.
- In general, answer each question in one, 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. Your candidacy committee will inform you when this needs to be submitted.
- Bring a copy of the essay with you to your Endorsement interview
- The contents of the essay must be your own. Include a bibliography and footnotes as appropriate.

Questions:

1. Looking back on the past year, name signs of Christ's abiding love and presence in your daily life and what they mean to you.
2. How has your own understanding of call deepened since your positive Entrance decision? What theological insights inform your understanding of call?
3. Which passage of Scripture resonates with your own faith journey, and why? Use interpretive/hermeneutical skills to explain your choice of passage.
4. Describe one new theological understanding you have discovered as you have made your way through seminary and candidacy.
5. With your understanding of the confessions, what do you find distinctive about the Lutheran understanding of God's mission in the world and why? How will this shape your leadership in ministry?(2 pages)
6. What about the ELCA do you feel particularly connected to, and why?
7. Reflect upon one person who has mentored you. What impact did they have on your own formation? In what ways do you hope to mentor others in your ministry?
8. Share your understanding of each roster and their distinct and interdependent role in the ecclesiology of the ELCA (and/or God's mission in the world). Which roster do you feel called to and why?
9. 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.