

Report of the Committee on Church Vocations (Candidacy)
Synod Assembly 2024

The process of Candidacy for Rostered Ministry is placed in the hands of the Synod's Committee on Church Vocations according to the policies and procedures of the ELCA. The Bishop appoints the synodical committee to attend to the tasks and decisions of the Candidacy process and to build relationships of support with our candidates.

Candidacy is a time of discernment and an interdependent process with sharing responsibilities and accountability among partners: candidates, congregations, the synodical committee, seminaries, and the Candidacy staff from Churchwide. The process is also undergoing a review and changes at this time. You may find more information in the report from Becky Resch, our regions Candidacy and Leadership Manager.

We are blessed in our synod to have a number of candidates in various stages and/or paths to rostered ministry. Let me briefly tell you about them.

Stephanie R. Chandler, is a member of Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kane. She is a student at United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg campus, following a more traditional tract. She has completed her first year, her field experience this year, is applying for Clinical Pastoral Education, but is taking the summer off from courses to take care of a personal family matter.

Jane C. Miller, is a member of Zion Lutheran Church, Shannondale. She is participating in the Distance Learning tract through United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg. That means that she is able to do her seminary course work remotely through online classes. She has completed her second year of coursework, is doing a two year internship with Trinity 3-2-1 in Indiana, and is participating in her Clinical Pastoral Education experience as we speak.

The following persons are preparing for rostered ministry through the TEEM tract. TEEM stands for Theological Education for Emerging Ministry, and the process is a bit different than for those who are full-time seminary students. TEEM students participate in intensive classroom instruction three or four times a year, and they serve in a congregation of the synod at the same time. They are expected to develop the same competencies as those candidates who are full-time seminary students. The Candidacy process is the same for TEEM candidates and full-time seminary candidates.

Those who are making their way through the TEEM tract are:

John A. Kearns, who is a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bradford. John has completed all of his coursework and is currently in an internship at Emmanuel. John will soon begin the process that leads to Final Approval and First Call. We expect that to happen in the spring of 2025.

Kevin, R. Schafer, is a member of Maria Lutheran Church, Dagus Mines. He is currently interning at St John's Lutheran Church in Johnsonburg.... having completed his coursework,

including CPE, and has received his TEEM certificate from United Lutheran Seminary last May. Kevin is completing the process that leads to Final Approval and First Call.

Michael K. Snider, is a member of Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Erie. Michael has served the synod as an Authorized Lay Worship Leader and has completed Clinical Pastoral Education. Michael will be completing his final courses as he interns with the West Erie Trinity, a cooperative ministry between St James Lutheran Church, Fairview and St John's Lutheran Church, Girard.

Roland D. (Ron) King is a member of Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Erie. Ron serves as pastoral leader at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Erie. He has an "official" internship to complete before he will be available for ordination and call.

I want to thank the Committee members who served during the 2023-2024 term: The Rev Dr. Martin Zimmann (our representative from ULS); Rev. Rebecca Resch, the ELCA Candidacy and Leadership Manager for Regions 7 and 8; The Rev. Randall Frenz (chaplain at Bethesda Lutheran Services in Meadville); Andrew Godinich from Good Hope, Oil City, Nicholas Barber from St Paul's, Erie, and Marie Carlstrom-Young from St Paul's, Erie. We appreciate your service and are grateful for the support you provide to our candidates through their preparation for rostered ministry.

We still have a vacancy on the committee for one Lay Woman. If you feel God calling you to serve this way, please speak to me or to Bishop Lozano.

I want to thank Bishop Lozano for the support and encouragement he has provided this past year. Along with the support and encouragement of Pr Becky Resch, the bishop's calm demeanor has helped me to relax and do the job they seemed to know that I could do. This has become an amazing source of seeing God at work through the Holy Spirit. Please continue to pray for all our candidates as they navigate through the process called Candidacy. May I even suggest that you include them weekly, along with the bishop, in the Prayers of Intercession as you worship?

Thanks be to God for all the amazing things God has done, and continues to do, in each of our lives.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev Karen Thompson

(The Rev Karen Thompson, Chairperson, Committee on Church Vocations (Candidacy))