

# Endorsement Essay

2011-2013

Congregational & Synodical Mission Unit



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Dear Candidate,

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 form of ministry to which you feel called (pastor, diaconal, deaconess, associate in ministry) 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. For TEEM candidates, you may already have completed your internship. For those on other paths to rostering, once Endorsement is given, you may plan for and begin your required internship or fieldwork experience, after which you move toward approval.

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.

Faithfully,

*Your partners in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit*

# Endorsement Process

## Endorsement Panel

Students at ELCA seminaries meet with an endorsement panel during the early part of their second year of study. The panel consists of two Candidacy Committee members and one faculty member. The panel provides a recommendation to the full Candidacy Committee, which makes the decision regarding endorsement. Candidacy committees arrange for endorsement interviews for those not at ELCA seminaries. Candidates not enrolled at ELCA seminaries should be in contact with their candidacy committee to determine the appropriate time and location for the Endorsement Interview.

## Endorsement Materials

- +Entrance decision report, especially noted areas for growth
- +Endorsement essay (10 pages written by candidate)
- +CPE report (should be completed prior to endorsement)
- +Academic report from first year of study

## Endorsement Decision

1. *ENDORSEMENT* reflects the committee's confidence in the candidate's gifts and abilities and indicates that unless there are unexpected difficulties, it is anticipated that the candidate will continue to grow toward readiness to serve in rostered ministry.
2. *POSTPONEMENT* indicates that while the committee sees potential for the individual to serve in rostered ministry, there are developmental needs outside the normal range which must be addressed and reevaluated, or conditions which must be met before the candidate can be endorsed and participate in an internship.
3. *DENIAL* states that there are specific reasons why the person seeking candidacy is not an appropriate candidate for rostered ministry. Reasons must be clearly identified.

# ENDORSEMENT ESSAY

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Candidacy for Ordained, Consecrated, and Commissioned Ministry

The endorsement essay provides a means for you to explore your personal and interpersonal skills, your academic and theological ability, and your spiritual formation and faith, as well as to reflect on your call to ministry. Please be genuine and clear as you prepare this essay. This is not intended to be an academic paper, but rather a personal reflection paper that will assist the Endorsement Panel when you are interviewed.

As you prepare to write the essay:

- ❖ Read chapters 1,4,7 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions: Confession of Faith, Statement of Purpose, and Ministry ([www.elca.org/constitution](http://www.elca.org/constitution)) .
- ❖ Read and use the document “*Vision and Expectations*” ( [www.elca.org/rosteredleadership](http://www.elca.org/rosteredleadership) )
- ❖ Incorporate your learning and any formative experiences since entrance.
- ❖ Be sure to limit your paper to **10 pages, double-spaced, numbered, with your name** on each page. Include the heading of each section in your paper.
- ❖ 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

## **I. CALL TO MINISTRY**

Reflect theologically on your vocation as it is grounded in baptism, in contexts such as family, confirmation, friendships, work settings, school and community.

State your understanding of the church's leadership needs and the contribution of the form of ministry in which you seek to serve: ordained, consecrated, or commissioned. What gifts will enable you to serve in this particular ministry? What challenges or excites you about your sense of call?

God gives the gift of ministry to the whole church. What does that mean to you? What is your relationship with others in the church?

## **II. FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION**

Give a clear statement of faith that reflects your understanding of the heart of the Lutheran confessional witness.

You will be asked to serve in accordance with the Scriptures, the creeds, and the confessions of the ELCA. In light of doctrinal traditions what characteristics or functions will reflect your role as a "diligent and faithful" rostered minister in this church?

What is your understanding of the mission of the church?

## **III. FAITHFUL LIVING**

Reflect on your personal, vocational, and spiritual development since beginning the candidacy process. How have you been challenged, strengthened, or delighted?

What contributes to the nourishment of your faith, health and well-being?

You are expected to make a "commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living." How do you understand your responsibility as a public minister "whose life and conduct are above reproach"?

Resources for writing the essay: [www.elca.org/constitution](http://www.elca.org/constitution) ELCA Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions (Confession of Faith (Ch. 1), Statement of Purpose (Ch. 4), Ministry (Ch. 7) "*Vision and Expectations*" – *Ordained Ministry*; "*Vision and Expectations* – *Associates in Ministry* [www.elca.org/rosteredleadership](http://www.elca.org/rosteredleadership)