



Worship and Ministry Department

1000 University Ave. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

## **WHAT IS A CALL TO MINISTRY?**

As a part of the Body of Christ every individual is called to use his/her talents and gifts as a minister of Christ. However, there are many ways to serve God. For some the call to serve is in ordained ministry, for some in diaconal ministry and for many others in a variety of different vocations and as volunteers within the church.

A call to either rostered ministry – ordained or diaconal – involves both a personal conviction and a corporate confirmation. Probably the reason you are reading this handbook is that you have a sense of personal conviction that God might be calling you to rostered ministry.

## **ORDAINED MINISTRY**

### ***What is it?***

Pastors are baptized persons whom the ELCIC calls and ordains to the church's ministry of Word and Sacrament. On behalf of the church, pastors give leadership and vision to Christian communities of faith. Pastors are called to provide faithful preaching, teaching and witness to the Scriptures and the doctrinal teaching of the ELCIC. They work in intentional partnership with bishops, other pastors, lay diaconal ministers, lay leaders in congregations and synods, synod and national staff, and ecumenical partners in common mission.

Called and accountable to this church, ordained ministers also extend the ministry of Word and Sacrament beyond congregations into specialized settings such as institutional chaplaincy; colleges and seminaries; camps and missionary fields; and synodical and national offices.

### ***What are the prerequisites?***

Candidates for ministry in the ELCIC are expected to be a graduate of a recognized college or university although both ELCIC seminaries have programs for individuals who do not have a university degree.

Candidates for ministry in the ELCIC are required to have been an active member of an ELCIC Lutheran congregation for a minimum of two years.

## **DIACONAL MINISTRY**

### ***What is it?***

A diaconal minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is a baptized person who is called by and publicly serves the church with primary responsibility for witnessing to the gospel through a ministry of service. Diaconal ministers are paid employees serving under call to a congregation or agency. Diaconal ministers carry out a public ministry of service and witness. With demonstrated competence and expertise in a particular discipline, diaconal ministers may serve both within and outside of congregational settings. Examples of areas of specialization in public diaconal ministry are listed below:

- Church musician,
- Christian Education Director,
- Congregational outreach coordinator,
- Youth worker,
- Parish worker,
- Parish nurse,
- Parish administrator.

### ***What are the prerequisites?***

Candidates for diaconal ministry in the ELCIC need to have demonstrated competence in at least one area of specialization with a minimum of a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree or a professional certificate appropriate to the designated field of specialization. If the degree is in an unrelated field of study, significant work experience (minimum of three years) with leadership responsibilities appropriate to the type of diaconal ministry being sought is required.

Candidates for ministry in the ELCIC are required to have been an active member of an ELCIC Lutheran congregation for a minimum of two years.

### ***What are the requirements?***

Candidates for ministry in the ELCIC are expected to earn a Master of Divinity, Bachelor of Theology or Diploma in Theology at one of the seminaries of this church. The course of theological study is designed to prepare a pastor to express and reflect on this church's understanding of the gospel and the ministry of the church as expressed in the historic Lutheran confessions. The programme of study includes courses in biblical, systematic, historical and practical theology. Students may be permitted to study at an accredited theological school other than one of the ELCIC with the approval of their synod's candidacy committee (CTEL/CCOM). A candidate who studies at another seminary is required to complete a minimum one year residency at an ELCIC seminary for Lutheran formation.

All candidates for ordained ministry are expected to engage in spiritual formation through regular worship, prayer and other spiritual disciplines.

Candidates are required to complete one quarter of supervised pastoral education in their degree and diploma programs. Such a course provides an opportunity to practice the art of pastoral care while converting experience into learning.

Candidates are also required to complete a one year internship facilitates the integration of academic study and theological education with the practice of ministry.

### ***What about the church process?***

Persons seeking ordination as pastors in the ELCIC are expected to participate fully in all steps of the candidacy process established by the national church and administered by a synod Candidacy Committee. The process consists of four phases described below. Registration involves initial contact by an individual with a synod bishop or candidacy committee, completion of the Registration application and forms including

### ***What are the requirements?***

The basic foundation coursework in theological education shall include a minimum of one year of studies at a minimum of a bachelor's level (or 30 semester credit hours). At least one course must be completed in each of the following areas: Biblical Studies, Old Testament; Biblical Studies, New Testament; Lutheran Theology and Confessional Writings; Canadian and Lutheran Church History; Ethics.

Additional courses should include Practical Theology appropriate to the specialization. All theological credits must be earned through courses at an accredited college or seminary of this church or through a course of study approved by the synod's candidacy committee (CTEL/CCOM) based on guidelines developed by the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry of the ELCIC.

Candidates are encouraged to consider a Masters in Theological Studies offered at an ELCIC seminary.

Candidates for diaconal ministry must complete a required formational component in the preparation program for Lutheran diaconal ministry as defined by the ELCIC. Currently this means the successful completion of a two-week diaconal ministry formation event.

Candidates must also satisfactorily complete a supervised field experience in their field of specialization designed in consultation with and approved by the Candidacy Committee. This field experience may include a 9-12 month full-time internship.

### ***What about the church process?***

Persons seeking consecration as lay diaconal ministers in the ELCIC are expected to fully participate in all steps of the candidacy process. The candidacy process is the shared responsibility of the candidate and the Candidacy Committee.

Initial contact begins a process of discernment which explores an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin theological study and candidacy in the ELCIC.

recommendations from a variety of sources, a structured interview and psychological testing and career evaluation.

Initial Endorsement concludes the Registration phase. Endorsement by the synod CTEL/CCOM is required for ordination candidates before beginning theological studies.

Annual Endorsement is required for continuation in studies and for internship.

Reports of academic and contextual education are required as well as successful completion of the annual Developmental Interview.

Final Evaluation combines a final evaluation report and recommendation by the CTEL with self-evaluation by the candidate and reports from a variety of sources. A positive recommendation will bring the candidate to an Examination (Colloquy) consisting of a written examination and interview by the synod Examining Committee. The Examining Committee may then recommend the candidate to Synod Council for first call and ordination.

### *Anything else?*

For more information you can refer to the Candidacy Manual of the ELCIC which you can find on the ELCIC website or contact your synod office.

### **British Columbia Synod**

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New Westminster, BC V3L 4R5

### **Eastern Synod**

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Kitchener, ON N2H 3Z3

### **Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod**

201 3657 Roblin Blvd  
Winnipeg, MB R3R 0E2

The process includes registration, structured interview and psychological and career evaluation through the synod CTEL/CCOM, and positive annual endorsement throughout the candidacy.

Final Evaluation combines a final evaluation report and recommendation by the CTEL/CCOM with self-evaluation by the candidate and reports from a variety of sources. A positive recommendation will bring the candidate to an Examination (Colloquy) consisting of a written examination and interview by the synod Examining Committee. The Examining Committee may then recommend the candidate to Synod Council for first call and consecration.

### *Anything else?*

For more information you can refer to the Candidacy Manual of the ELCIC, especially the document “*Standards for Diaconal Ministry*” which you can find on the ELCIC website or contact your synod office.

### **Saskatchewan Synod**

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### **Synod of Alberta and the Territories**

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