

# I'm a Lutheran



## Lenny Duncan

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Seminarian and candidate for ordained ministry

**I found my faith** in the forgotten places, where hope seems like an intruder—homeless, mired in alcoholism and seemingly alone. The truth is it found me at the end of my rope.

**My first experience with church** was with a new mission in a different church context. I was one of the only voices of color and the only local going out and “being church.” I couldn’t imagine living out my baptismal call any other way.

**I believe** it’s a time of renewal in the ELCA and mainline churches, and that I’m specifically called here at this time.

**I pray** that the wider church finds space and need for my and my family’s gifts. My sincere desire is to pour my life out for the betterment of the body of Christ.

I struggle with balance and saying no. Ever since I have said yes to the church and yes to Jesus, I haven't found a ministry endeavor I didn't want to take on.

I share my faith in my walk and in my raising up the cries of the people. I share my faith by showing up and sharing the gospel, and being a witness to what the Spirit is doing in this generation.

An issue I'm fighting for is racial inclusion for all the marginalized in the ELCA and what it means to be church in the 21st century.

As part of the ELCA Confronting Racism webcast, I knew that no matter what was or wasn't said, open wounds would still need to be healed and love would somehow still march on ([elca.org/webcast](http://elca.org/webcast)). It was an affirmation of my call in this church and the work I have ahead of me.

In seminary I have met my heroes. I'm surrounded by people who said yes: yes to long thankless nights in sermon prep; yes to the daunting questions the wider church faces over the next 20 years; yes to discipleship and the high cost of a life lived for Christ.

Most people think I'm lying when I say I'm studying to be a pastor.

My favorite church memory was when we reaffirmed and renamed a transgendered member of my home congregation.

When people say the church is dying, I remind them that we are a people whose hopes are tied to the Easter event and we're called to proclaim resurrection.

I'm a Lutheran because my life only makes sense when viewed through the lens of grace. 

Sentence prompts are provided to each person featured. If you'd like to nominate someone for "I'm a Lutheran," email [megan.brandsrud@elca.org](mailto:megan.brandsrud@elca.org).

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