

SECTION H – ELCA CHURCHWIDE AND RELATED

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3. Churchwide 2023 Annual Report

REGION 7 & 8



Candidacy and Leadership
Regions 7 and 8
2024 Annual Report to Synod Assembly

Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NRSV

Friends in Christ, grace to you and peace as you gather in assembly.

When I talk with folks, I am sometimes asked what I do for my job. When I was a parish pastor, it was relatively easy to describe. Every day in parish ministry is different, but most people, even folks who are not church folks or who actively practice a different faith, have some understanding of worshiping communities and the people who lead those communities. It is not quite as easy to describe this ministry to community members or new candidacy partners. I usually say something like, “I work with people who want to become pastors or deacons. And, I work with the people *who interview the people* who want to be pastors or deacons in our church.”

The follow-up question might be: How do people *actually become* a deacon or pastor in the ELCA?

We trust that the Holy Spirit nudges candidates and guides discernment. A candidate will engage in education, practical experiences, and the candidacy process in their home synod. A synod candidacy committee meets confidentially to engage with candidates to interview, have discernment conversation, accompany, and assess readiness for ordination. The committee works with partners throughout the church—seminaries, synod and churchwide staff, home congregations, and candidates to accomplish this task on behalf of the whole church.

Committees listen to a sense of internal call that the candidate brings; are attentive for signs of an external sense of call; vote to grant, postpone, or deny candidates at 3 main decision points; and wait to see if after a candidate is approved they will be extended a letter of call and the gift of ordination. You can read more about candidacy and this process at www.elca.org/Resources/Candidacy

Since my last report to you in 2023, Candidacy Committee partners were invited to participate in an online Candidacy Summit, “Called to Accompany and Called to Discern” across the ELCA. In 2024, there will be an opportunity for candidacy leaders from regions 7 & 8 to meet at United Lutheran Seminary for training and collaboration days.

Since 2022, the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG) has been re-envisioning the entire candidacy process. The CLDWG has started to share possible candidacy changes with candidacy partners and is welcoming feedback. The hope is a new process will be voted on at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025. Please hold all partners in prayer as there becomes more clarity on the future of candidacy. You can learn more at: www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Candidacy-Leadership-Development

Thank you for your synod's participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

In Christ,

The Rev. A. Rebecca Resch (she/her)

Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Regions 7 & 8

becky.resch@elca.org

Region 7: ~ New Jersey Synod ~ New England Synod ~ Metropolitan New York Synod ~ Upstate New York Synod ~
~ Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Slovak Zion Synod ~

Region 8: ~ Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Allegheny Synod ~
~ Lower Susquehanna Synod ~ Upper Susquehanna Synod ~ Delaware-Maryland Synod ~
~ Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod ~ West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod ~

BISHOP EATON'S LETTER TO SYNOD ASSEMBLIES 2024

See Section H, Addendum 1 & 2 - English/Spanish

CHURCHWIDE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

See Section H, Addendum 3