

SECTION H – ELCA CHURCHWIDE AND RELATED

1. Region 7 & 8
2. Bishop Easton Letter to Synod Assemblies 2026
3. Churchwide 2025 Annual Report

REGION 7 & 8



Candidacy and Leadership
Regions 7 and 8
2026 Annual Report to Synod Assembly

*Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go:
you alone are our life and our peace and our love.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.*

Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community. "Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song."
Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006, #808, v. 1

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace to you and peace as you meet in synod assembly. I write to you with greetings from my Candidacy Team Colleagues on Churchwide Staff and my home synod of New Jersey.

The ministry of Candidacy is one of accompanying, evaluating, and assessing the readiness of people who discern a call to pastoral or diaconal ministry. Each synod has a committee that does this confidential and prayerful work on behalf of the whole church. The committee includes clergy and lay members, a seminary representative, and synod staff or Bishop. Your synod has a committee that has met in the past year to do this work. You can read more about their ministry elsewhere in this bulletin of reports. I have the honor of working with these committees in the northeast and mid-Atlantic as they listen to candidates, ask questions, and consider how God is calling people to serve.

In 2022, a Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG) was convened to start reenvisioning candidacy ministry in the ELCA. Since my report to you a year ago, the work of this group has changed. After years of surveys, planning, and dreaming, the work has shifted from the CLDWG to churchwide staff to begin the rollout of a launch for a new candidacy process. Of the 65 synods in the ELCA, 10 are “candidacy launch synods” who will be working with applicants and candidates in these next few years under a newly proposed candidacy process. These launch synods will also provide valuable feedback so that a new candidacy process can be finalized for the whole church.

Main elements of this new candidacy process include:



Accompanier with candidates throughout the process



Discernment as a more intentional and robust time prior to meeting for an Entrance Interview



Annual Reviews with candidates instead of an Endorsement



Competency based emphasis for meeting milestones throughout candidacy



Continuing to honor both MDiv and Certificate pathways for candidates

Synods that are not “candidacy launch synods” will continue with the current candidacy process until 2028 or 2029 when we anticipate a rollout of the new candidacy process across the ELCA.

While we continue in the ministry of accompanying and assessing potential deacons or pastors in the ELCA, we appreciate your prayers. The church needs leaders who are equipped, called, and prepared to serve the church. If *you* are sensing a call to serve as a deacon or pastor in the ELCA, please contact your synod staff person for candidacy for further conversation.

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 CURRY’S LETTER TO SYNOD ASSEMBLIES 2026

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

CHURCHWIDE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

See Section H, Addendum 3