

Guidelines for Florida Bahamas Synod Candidates for Ordination
at Non-ELCA Seminaries

June 11, 2012

Based on ELCA Candidacy Manual (as revised and approved April 2010)

The ELCA candidacy process welcomes students studying at any accredited seminary or divinity school and values the diversity of thought that comes from varied experiences in theological education. The ELCA also recognized the need for education and formation in the Lutheran tradition for those who will serve as pastors of ELCA congregations. This is accomplished by a year of study in an ELCA seminary and a year of full time internship in parish ministry that is supervised by an ELCA seminary.

Candidates for ordained ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America attending non-ELCA seminaries must **affiliate** with a particular ELCA seminary in consultation with their Candidacy Committee. Affiliation is a relationship designed to assist students in fulfilling requirements for ordained ministry and is described in detail in the ELCA Candidacy Manual (online at <http://www.elca.org/candidacy/pp.28-30>). Affiliation should take place as early as possible, preferably during a student's first year, but must occur before endorsement. At least one year must elapse between endorsement and approval.

Students apply for affiliate status through the normal seminary admissions procedure. Candidates pay a one-time affiliation fee of \$500 to the ELCA seminary, which then appoints a faculty advisor to accompany the student throughout the process.

After affiliation, candidates assume responsibility for developing a plan with the affiliate seminary for completing all requirements for ordination in consultation with the Candidacy Committee, faculty advisor, and academic dean of the ELCA seminary.

All students studying in non-ELCA seminaries will:

- Complete a year of residency at an ELCA seminary (the Lutheran Year)
- Participate in an endorsement interview with the Candidacy Committee
- Complete a unit of CPE
- Complete a parish internship administered by the seminary of affiliation
- Receive recommendation regarding approval for ordination from the faculty of the ELCA seminary of affiliation

The Lutheran Year – Residency at an ELCA Seminary

Primary contact: ELCA seminary Dean

All students graduating from a non-ELCA seminary will complete a year of residency at an ELCA seminary. A year of residency generally means just that – a year of being present on an ELCA seminary campus, taking advantage of not only academic work but also of opportunities for sharing in worship, developing collegial relationships, and becoming a participant in the current theological conversation of the ELCA. A complete description of goals and recommended coursework for residency is found in the ELCA Candidacy Manual, p. 29–30.

The Lutheran Year can fit into the student's theological education in three ways (although not every option is accepted by every ELCA seminary) and should be planned in close consultation

with the Candidacy Committee, the ELCA seminary's academic dean and the ELCA seminary faculty advisor:

1. The student can complete an M.Div. at a non-ELCA seminary and then attend an ELCA seminary for the Lutheran Year. This is the least complicated option, but will extend the student's education by one year. The student may apply to an STM program at the ELCA seminary and complete much of the work toward that degree during the Lutheran Year. It is possible, however, that the Lutheran Year will include courses not at the advanced level needed to count toward an STM.
2. The student may complete the Lutheran Year as the second or third year of the M.Div. and transfer the credit earned back to the non-ELCA seminary from which the student plans to receive their final degree. In this case, the student needs to consider carefully how the Lutheran Year courses will fit into the degree requirements at that seminary. In addition, the student needs to ascertain whether the non-ELCA seminary will accept a full year of transfer credit.
3. The student may complete a portion of his or her work at a non-ELCA seminary, transfer to an ELCA seminary, and receive an M.Div. from the ELCA seminary. In this case, the student must be in early and close contact with the dean at the ELCA seminary to ensure that the program at the non-ELCA seminary matches the ELCA seminary curriculum as closely as possible. The student may need to do more than one year of work at an ELCA seminary to complete all requirements for the M.Div.

The student should discuss these options with the Candidacy Committee and with the academic dean at the ELCA seminary of affiliation. Specific coursework for the Lutheran year is determined by the dean of the ELCA seminary, in consultation with the Candidacy Committee.

Because the purpose of the Lutheran Year is to provide both education and formation, normally it is not waived or reduced in length. In exceptional cases, the requirement may be waived in full or in part for students who have a strong background in Lutheran studies. In all such cases, the decision will be made at the time of endorsement by the Candidacy Committee in consultation with the ELCA seminary of affiliation, and if possible, with the student's non-ELCA seminary. Such a decision must also receive final approval from the ELCA's Congregational Mission and Support Unit. In such a case, however, the ELCA seminary faculty must still make a recommendation concerning final approval for ordination (see below). The ELCA Candidacy Manual outlines circumstances under which a waiver of residency might be considered.

Endorsement

Primary contact: Candidacy committee

For students at a non-ELCA seminary, the normal endorsement panel will be replaced by an endorsement interview with the Candidacy Committee. The Candidacy Committee may request recommendations in writing from the student's faculty at both the non-ELCA and ELCA seminaries (Candidacy Manual, p. 28). Endorsement interviews for students who do a Lutheran Year prior to internship are most often scheduled in the fall of the year when endorsement panels are held for middlers at the ELCA seminary. Students who wish to be endorsed on a different schedule should make arrangements with the candidacy committee. Endorsement must precede

internship placement and there must be at least one year between endorsement and the final approval of a candidate.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Primary Contact: ELCA seminary contextual education department

Candidates must fulfill four hundred hours of supervised clinical ministry for ordination, typically through completion of one unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE). Fulfillment of the CPE requirement may be arranged either through the candidate's non-ELCA seminary or through the ELCA seminary of affiliation. When the candidate completes this requirement through a non-ELCA seminary, the candidate must consult with the ELCA seminary of affiliation to ensure that the program meets the ELCA ordination standard.

Internship

Primary contact: ELCA seminary contextual education department.

The ELCA seminary of affiliation supervises the internship process in consultation with the Candidacy Committee. Students must be endorsed prior to internship assignment. The Florida-Bahamas Synod also prefers that students complete CPE and the Lutheran Year before internship. This schedule best prepares students for internship and also allows participation in the normal placement process (which varies fairly widely by seminary.) Some ELCA seminaries require that certain courses be completed before internship. It is the student's responsibility, in consultation with the faculty advisor and the contextual education director of the affiliated ELCA seminary, to meet all such requirements.

Faculty approval

Primary contact: ELCA seminary Dean

A faculty approval panel will be held prior to the Candidacy Committee's approval interview in order to provide a recommendation regarding approval for the committee's consideration. ELCA seminaries have different deadlines for approval essays and different requirements for the number of months of internship that must be completed before the faculty will consider a decision. The timing of the approval process should be discussed early in the student's career to aid in planning and to make transitions as smooth as possible. Detailed information regarding the assignment process, including all important deadlines, can be found at www.elca.org/assignment. Students for whom the Lutheran Year is waived also must receive recommendation from the faculty of the ELCA seminary of affiliation for approval for ordination. The process is described in the Candidacy Manual (p. 30).

Planning Sheet for Candidates at Non-ELCA Seminaries
To be completed and returned to the Candidacy Committee
by the end of the first semester/quarter.

The Florida-Bahamas Synod Guidelines for students attending non-ELCA seminaries outlines a process for completing candidacy for ordained ministry. A much more complete description can be found in the candidacy manual which is available online at www.elca.org/candidacy (primarily 28 ff.).

The questions below have to do with expectations and may need to be modified according to circumstances. However, such advance planning aids both candidate and Candidacy Committee throughout the process. Many of these questions will need to be answered in consultation with the appropriate seminary or candidacy contact person.

Name _____
Preferred mailing address: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

M.Div. degree to be completed at _____ Seminary
Expected date of completion: _____

ELCA Seminary of affiliation: _____
Affiliation fee submitted (date): _____

Expected date of Lutheran Year: _____ to _____
(example: September 2013 to May 2014).

Expected date for completion of unit of CPE _____.

Expected date of endorsement decision: _____.
(Normally the decision will be in the fall of the Lutheran Year, if the Lutheran Year immediately precedes internship.)

Expected date of internship: _____ (usually summer to summer).

Expected date for approval for ordination interview with Candidacy Committee:
_____ (spring, summer, or fall) of _____ (year), and to be
available for assignment in _____ (month) of _____ (year).

Please complete and return <u>by the end of student's first semester/quarter</u> to the Candidacy Committee at 3838 West Cypress Street Tampa, Florida 33607
