

MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The main responsibility of the Ministry Committee of the Metro Chicago Synod is to oversee the candidacy process for those people seeking to serve as one of the rostered ministers of the ELCA: associate in ministry, deaconess, diaconal minister, or ordained minister. We oversee this process for about 75 candidates. Our responsibilities include serving on the three panels each candidate must participate in – entrance, endorsement (before being approved to serve in an internship), and approval (before being authorized to serve in one of the four rostered ministries). We conduct the endorsement and approval panels together with the other two ELCA Synods in Illinois through the Illinois Multi-Synodical Candidacy Committee.

Since the last Synod Assembly we have given positive entrance decisions to eight candidates, and we will have considered five more candidates for entrance decisions in our late April meeting. Since last June the Illinois Multi-Synodical Candidacy Committee (ILMSCC) has endorsed sixteen candidates and given approval to seven candidates from the Metro Chicago Synod. In the interim between the writing of this report and the Synod Assembly the ILMSCC may endorse another five candidates from our synod. We provide some scholarship support to thirty-seven candidates who are active students at one of our ELCA seminaries.

The Ministry Committee schedules “Entrance Events” two or three times a year, conducting entrance panels for prospective candidates and offering orientation sessions to explain the candidacy process. Since our last report we have held Entrance Events on September 22, 2007, and January 12, 2008, and we will have held another one on April 26, 2008.

As part of our efforts to maintain a close relationship with our candidates we sponsor social gatherings for those under the care of our committee. We held a social event for candidates at the synod office on the evening of December 13, 2007, and a luncheon for our candidates at LSTC on April 1, 2008. One of our committee members is also assigned to function as a “relator,” or liaison, for each of the candidates under our care.

The Ministry Committee also oversees professional leadership support in our synod. We do this by sponsoring our synod’s annual professional leaders conference each fall. We coordinate a program of “First Call Theological Education” for persons in the first three years of their ministries.

“Partnership” is a key word for our committee, for we work together with our seminaries, the ELCA’s Vocation and Education Unit, and the candidacy committees of the other Illinois synods. Since we are now required to use background checks for all candidates under our care, we have been developing training and procedures for how to use the information from these background checks in our candidacy decisions.

Likewise crucial is our partnership with you, the pastors and leaders of our congregations, as you identify, support, and evaluate our candidates for ministry. We offered a “Candidacy: Check It Out” event on April 12, 2008, and we encourage you to continue to lift up those members of your congregations in whom you recognize the gifts of the Spirit for service in the church and to suggest that they enter the candidacy process. Thank you for your help!

Rev. Roger E. Timm, Chair