

**2017 REPORT TO SYNOD ASSEMBLIES**  
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**ELCA Candidacy Leadership in Regions 3 and 4**

Many readers of this report will know that the former positions of Regional Coordinators have been eliminated from the ELCA Churchwide staff. A new Churchwide staff team responsible for candidacy leadership throughout the ELCA has been convened, involving a combination of Chicago-based and deployed Churchwide personnel. The new candidacy leadership team serves under the direction of Greg Villalon, ELCA Director for Candidacy, and is part of the ELCA's Domestic Mission unit, directed by Stephen Bouman. I am pleased to serve on the new candidacy leadership team, and my particular position relates to the fifteen synods of Regions 3 and 4. March 1 was the start date of my new position, which means that I am still early into my work as I write this report.

“Candidacy” is the term by which the ELCA refers to its work of accompaniment and formation with people who are preparing to serve as rostered ministry leaders – pastors and deacons – in the ELCA. Each synod has a candidacy committee that carries out that work on behalf of the ELCA in relation to the men and women who discern a vocation to prepare for public ministry leadership in this church. Candidacy committees work with synod staff and other synod leaders to carry out their work. My primary responsibility is to provide timely support and assistance to the candidacy leaders, candidacy committees and candidates in each of the fifteen synods to which I now relate.

Since March 1, I have arranged a schedule of monthly phone conferences with the primary candidacy leaders in each synod of Regions 3 and 4. I have also been arranging my travel schedule so as to be present in person as a Churchwide partner with synod candidacy committees as often as possible when they convene for meetings, retreats and other occasions of gathering. Throughout the remainder of 2017 I will be present with each of the fifteen synodical candidacy committees at least once. Additionally, I also arrange all special interview and review panels with candidates as needed.

I conclude with the following request to all who read this report: Consider the people you know in your congregation or other ministry setting who demonstrate interest and gifts relevant to public ministry leadership, and encourage them to consider a vocation to serve as deacons or pastors in the ELCA. Also, then, assist them in connecting with your synod's candidacy committee so that they might begin their journey of formation and preparation.