

Montana Synod Candidacy Committee

The Montana Synod Candidacy Committee is part of the ELCA ministry that seeks to identify, nurture, train, and approve leaders for the public ministries of the church. Candidacy invites an active participation of congregations, Candidacy committees, seminaries, and the ELCA's Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, to work together with individuals who are discerning whether their vocation in life includes service in the church's "rostered ministries."

Currently the ELCA's public ministries are ordered in four **rosters**. Most people are familiar with **Ordained Ministers**, whose work is centered in Word and Sacrament. In addition, there are three ELCA lay rosters: **Diaconal Ministers** carry out ministries of Word and service in the world. **Associates in Ministry** work in partnership with other rostered ministers and with other lay people to serve mission and ministry needs, usually in the context of the church's congregations, agencies or institutions. Members of the **Deaconess Community**, which grew out of a nineteenth-century movement among Lutherans and others in Germany, are women acting in community to serve church and world.

(Besides the ministries towards which Candidacy is directed, the Montana Synod also has a separate program for preparing and recognizing Lay Pastoral Associates [LPA] for various kinds of ministerial service within the Synod, sometimes as Synodically Authorized Ministers [SAM]. Some other synods have comparable programs.)

As it works with those who are discerning and preparing for church vocations, the Montana Synod Candidacy Committee, on behalf of the whole church, makes three important decisions along the way: *Entrance* recognizes promise for ministerial leadership and formally brings a candidate into the whole process. *Endorsement* acknowledges that the candidate is ready for internship or field work within the particular arena of ministry for which she or he is preparing. *Approval* indicates to the whole church that the candidate is now ready to be called into its public leadership.

Members of the Candidacy Committee include **Wava Goetz** and **Kathy Johnson** (both of Great Falls, and whose terms are completed in June), **Peter Metcalf** (Missoula), **Pastor Linda Rose** (Shepherd), **Pastor Kim Wilker** (Red Lodge), **John Mundinger** (Helena), **Bishop Jessica Crist** (*ex officio*), **Rev. Mark Nelson** (*advisory*, ELCA Region 1 Coordinator), **Rev. Dr. Kathryn Schifferdecker** (*faculty advisor from Luther Seminary*), and **Rev. Bob Quam** (*Synod staff representative*). Committee members not serving in *ex officio* or advisory capacities are appointed by the Montana Synod Council to four-year terms which may be renewed once.

Currently active Montana Synod Candidates (14 total):

for Ordained Ministry (8): **Ashley Allinger** (Great Falls, Luther Seminary distance learning [DL] student), **Sylvia Bull** (Great Falls, Princeton Theological Seminary, *approved*), **Marlow Carrels** (Sand Springs, Wartburg Theological Seminary distance learning [DL] student, *endorsed*), **Jeremy Duprey** (Big Timber, Luther Seminary DL, *endorsed*), **Megan Hayes** (Helena, Wartburg Theological Seminary, *approved*), **Jessica Obrecht** (Havre, Lutheran School of Theology, *endorsed*), **Stephanie White** (Kalispell, Luther Seminary). **Peter Christ** (Red Lodge, Luther Seminary graduate) has been approved and is while in the assignment/call process is serving with a congregation in the Twin Cities.

for Ordained Ministry through TEEM – Theological Education for Emerging Ministries, an ELCA initiative to prepare leaders for service in special locations/situations of missional word and Sacrament worshipping communities (3): **Charles Bott** (Billings, LPA serving as SAM at First American in Hardin), **Tonia Fisher-Clark** (Billings, LPA serving as SAM at St. James in Columbus, *approved*), **Doris Tollefson** (Hinsdale, serving as SAM at Hinsdale and Saco), *endorsed*.

for Associate in Ministry (3): **Colter McCarty** (Great Falls), **Keith Weatherford** (Laurel), **Carol Will** (Helena, *endorsed*).

Do you think you might be called towards the church's public ministries? Do you know someone who may be interested and promising for such service? Contact the Synod Office, the Synod Staff Representative for Candidacy, or anyone on the Candidacy Committee. And keep this ministry, and our candidates, in your prayers.

Submitted by Bob Quam

Synod Representative for Candidacy