

**REPORT TO THE SYNODS OF REGIONS 7 AND 8**  
**REV. DR. PAUL BAGLYOS**

Greetings to you, People of God, in the fifteen synods of Regions 7 and 8, as you prepare for the work of our church in this 2018 season of synod assemblies.

I am pleased to serve among you as a deployed staff partner in our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. My current role is to provide candidacy and leadership support for the synods of these two regions. That work involves collaboration with your bishops, synod staff leadership teams, candidacy committees and candidates. “Candidacy” is the term by which the ELCA refers to the identification and formation of women and men preparing to serve as pastors and deacons in the rostered ministry of this church.

Candidacy involves a partnership between congregations and other local worshiping communities, seminaries, synods and the churchwide organization of the ELCA. One of the four guiding principles articulated by our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, is that “we are church together.” Candidacy is a good example of how that principle relates to practice. The work of candidacy involves the attention of all of us in the ELCA.

A recent news release from our churchwide organization highlights the collaborative nature of our work in candidacy. That release can be accessed through this link: <http://elca.org/News-and-Events/7911> I heartily recommend that all of you who read this report would also read that release and open its own embedded links for further reflection.

Finally, I remind all of you that the Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA includes the shared responsibility to “seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel” (C12.04.j). Although the word is not used, that detail in our congregational constitutions refers to *candidacy*. One of the ministry commitments of all ECLA congregations is to help men and women gifted for service as deacons and pastors to discern a potential call to rostered ministry leadership and to respond faithfully to that call. How many of you reading this report belong to a congregation that currently has at least one member enrolled in a seminary and engaged in candidacy? How many of you reading this report might help your congregation to renew its attention to this shared commitment?

Candidacy in the ELCA: we’re in it together!