

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD, ELCA

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Candidacy Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod offers this living document to inspire and hold accountable our current and future work, particularly regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is the result of a long discernment that included: consultation with various specialists in the field, much prayer, discussion, vulnerability, pain from our past, and hope for our future. Please keep us, our work, and especially our future leaders in your prayers.

WE ARE CALLED TO

- Ground our work in our Christianity and our Lutheran identity.
- Be the priesthood of all believers.
- Recognize that everyone has a call to ministry, and we want to walk with people in the discernment of their gifts and their place in the church.
- Honor the uniqueness of God's call to each person and their varied paths or types of service.
- Pay particular attention to candidates who are people of color, LGBTQIAA+, people with disabilities, or women, that they have the support they need as they go through the process.
- Engage in difficult conversations in a healthy way that values the teaching of Matthew 18 and results in reconciliation.
- Practice diversity and truth.
- Honor cultures and varied expressions in relational ways.

WE LAMENT

- The historical and systemic racism/white supremacy of our church and our nation through self-identification.
- We carry racism and bias, consciously and unconsciously, and that we speak and act without thinking.
- We don't honor the differences among us, and we have a narrow way of seeing each other and our respective gifts.
- We each have limitations and we fail at times to recognize our need for God and each other.
- In encounters, when we fail to love each other, our humanity is lost by not seeing each other.
- The role of gatekeeper has been abused.
- Candidates do not feel they can be honest with us throughout the process.

IN OUR WORK AS A COMMITTEE, WE EXPECT TO DO THE FOLLOWING (CONTINUALLY CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER):

- Encourage candidates to find role models to support them in the process.
- Create diverse panels and be a committee that reflects the intended diversity of our synod.
- Provide an environment in panel discussions and all conversations with candidates that are open and transparent to encourage candidates to speak their own truth from their hearts.
- Express our expectations to congregations, our synod and bishop, seminaries, and candidates.

- Model being a gatekeeper in positive, safe ways.
- Practice difficult conversations in ways that are respectful and culturally sensitive.
- Confess our individual biases, together, before each vote we take.
- Continuously review our process for setting up panels for all interactions with candidates, for the diversity of the committee, and for ongoing quality improvement.
- Commit ourselves to being open and accountable to this living document.
- Review this document at least annually at spring meetings.