Candidacy Guidelines for Missional Leaders

The church must, “[Open] the missional imagination of congregations to differing types of Christian public leaders, new ways of preparation, innovative ways of financing and openness to a variety of ministries in a variety of contexts.” – LIFT Task Force

There is a new paradigm emerging in the 21st century for how the Church envisions and engages with God’s mission in the world. As a result, the ELCA is adopting a new lens for missional leadership in all aspects of ministry. This new lens will impact how leaders are formed throughout the candidacy process and seminary studies. Because there are many ways to define missional leadership, some of which are reflected in the following pages, it is important to recognize/emphasize why this shift is happening in the ELCA and how we are adapting to it. It is our hope that our church is growing into a new chapter in which rostered leaders will prepare for ministry in light of God’s mission for the sake of the world, will be encouraged to move away from previous “maintenance models” of ministry, and will embrace partnerships between church members/disciples and community members/leaders.

North American congregations today are on a mission field. Christian public leaders sent into this mission field are formed by the Triune God’s presence and activity in the world as a missionary God. Trinitarian theology is therefore a foundational framework for missional leadership. The following six lenses on missional leadership are essentially Trinitarian in nature, i.e., they are guided by the historical interpretations and new leadership paradigms emerging from our understanding of the Trinity as a sending, relational God.

It is hoped that candidates for rostered leadership in the ELCA during the candidacy process might progress from missional awareness during entrance, to missional articulation at endorsement, and finally to missional actualization and practice at approval.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, A MISSIONAL LEADER IS ONE WHO . . .</th>
<th>HABITS/BEHAVIORS Such as:</th>
<th>SKILLS/COMPETENCIES Such as:</th>
<th>ATTITUDES/BELIEFS Such as:</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE Such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . IS ROOTED IN THE PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY OF THE TRIUNE GOD.</td>
<td>• Engages in theological reflection and spiritual discernment</td>
<td>• Listening to the Word, the faith community, and the world</td>
<td>• The Triune God is missionary by nature.</td>
<td>• Trinitarian theology of our relational, sending God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this mean?</td>
<td>• Exercises faith practices rooted in the Gospel</td>
<td>• Interpreting the Scriptures as a mission document</td>
<td>• The church participates in God’s mission for the sake of the world.</td>
<td>• The Scriptures and Christian tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lives out Lutheran identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lutheran theology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A missional leader nurtures a vibrant relationship with the Triune God and leads Christian communities to do likewise as they participate in God’s mission for the sake of the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>. . . ENGAGES THE WAY OF THE CROSS.</th>
<th>HABITS/BEHAVIORS Such as:</th>
<th>SKILLS/COMPETENCIES Such as:</th>
<th>ATTITUDES/BELIEFS Such as:</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE Such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does this mean?</td>
<td>• Grounded in the Word and sacraments</td>
<td>• Leading by “identifying with” not “lording over”</td>
<td>• God is a God who suffers and bears the suffering of the world.</td>
<td>• Theology of incarnation, cross, and suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accompanies and serves the neighbor</td>
<td>• Leading communities of mutual servant leadership</td>
<td>• Suffering and death lead to resurrection and new life.</td>
<td>• Law and Gospel theology with its paradoxes and reversals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engages suffering: ours and others, especially at the margins</td>
<td>• Serving, risking, and sacrificing for the sake of God’s mission</td>
<td>• Hope, humility, and resilience are marks of servant leadership.</td>
<td>• Implications of the doctrine of vocation for mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trustworthy in the use of power and authority</td>
<td>• Responding to crises as occasions for new life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A missional leader shows people through word and deed the crucified Christ and enables them to envision what God is doing in their lives.
EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, A MISSIONAL LEADER IS ONE WHO . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HABITS/BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>SKILLS/COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>ATTITUDES/BELIEFS</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Such as:</td>
<td>Such as:</td>
<td>Such as:</td>
<td>Such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . RELATES THEOLOGY WITH CONTEXT AND CULTURE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does this mean?

- Develops awareness of God’s world
- Actively participates in God’s world
- Engages context and culture theologically, critically, and creatively
- Gathering and analyzing congregational and community demographics
- Analyzing complex social and religious issues
- Communicating cross culturally, intra-culturally and counter-culturally
- Theology is contextual.
- Context is theological.
- Authenticity
- Importance of reading the local audience
- Contextual and local realities and theology
- Theological analysis and interpretation of context and culture
- Cross cultural dynamics

A missional leader understands and interprets context and culture through the lens of Christian faith and prayerfully discerns opportunities in which the Gospel can be understood and shared by all people in their cultural contexts.

. . . EVANGELIZES

What does this mean?

- Demonstrates passion and imagination for sharing the Gospel
- Goes out and meets neighbors
- Finds creative ways to share the Gospel
- Attentiveness to the Holy Spirit
- Articulating and living out God’s grace
- Helping people interpret their daily lives in light of the Gospel
- Listening
- Conviction in the truth of the Gospel that we share with others
- The Gospel is inclusive of all.
- Faith formation happens in Christian community.
- Jesus Christ
- The Scriptures
- Theology of evangelism and conversion
- Faith formation

A missional leader actively believes and carries out Christ’s command to go out and share the Gospel with neighbors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, A MISSIONAL LEADER IS ONE WHO . . .</th>
<th>HABITS/BEHAVIORS Such as:</th>
<th>SKILLS/COMPETENCIES Such as:</th>
<th>ATTITUDES/BELIEFS Such as:</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE Such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . CULTIVATES CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND DISCIPLESHIP.</td>
<td>• Models holistic relationships with God, neighbors, and the world</td>
<td>• Guiding the church in discerning a Spirit-shaped vision for mission</td>
<td>• Community is shaped through openness to the gifts of others.</td>
<td>• Theology of justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this mean?</td>
<td>• Develops partnerships and networks</td>
<td>• Convening and empowering teams for mission</td>
<td>• The interdependence of gifts and differences is valued.</td>
<td>• Baptismal vocation as central to Christian community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practices reconciliation and mutual empowerment</td>
<td>• Delegating and sharing tasks according to the diverse gifts of the community</td>
<td>• Learning organizations enable others to act.</td>
<td>• Understanding of participatory leadership, systems, and groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pursues collaboration, coordination, and collegiality</td>
<td>• Stewarding the resources of the community</td>
<td>• Responsiveness and flexibility are important in forming community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A missional leader effectively forms and leads Christian communities which foster the growth of disciples of Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>. . . EQUIPS AND SENDS DISCIPLES INTO THE WORLD.</th>
<th>HABITS/BEHAVIORS Such as:</th>
<th>SKILLS/COMPETENCIES Such as:</th>
<th>ATTITUDES/BELIEFS Such as:</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE Such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does this mean?</td>
<td>• Identifies and utilizes the strengths of the faith community to serve in God’s world</td>
<td>• Faithfully pointing to God’s Triune presence and activity in the world</td>
<td>• God’s mission is Spirit-led and apostolic.</td>
<td>• Biblical and theological foundations for mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobilizes disciples to witness, mercy, and justice</td>
<td>• Embodying the Christian faith in daily living</td>
<td>• The priesthood of all believers carry out God’s mission in the world.</td>
<td>• Missio Dei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partners with others for the sake of the world</td>
<td>• Encouraging and supporting sharing the Gospel by others</td>
<td>• The Christian community has a public calling in the world.</td>
<td>• Understanding of the planting, growth, and maturation of faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A missional leader prepares disciples to live out their Christian faith in the world by sharing the Gospel in word and deed with neighbors for the care and redemption of all that God has made.

© 2012 - Region 9 (ELCA) Candidacy Pilot Project. All Rights Reserved. Draft 10.01.12
Suggested reading:

4) *Multiplying Missional Leaders: From Half-hearted Volunteers to a Mobilized Kingdom Force* by Mike Breen (3Dimensional Ministries, 2012).