



Office of the Bishop

Northern Illinois Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Dear friends in Christ:

The phone rang late in the evening. It was our son Nathan. "I got Pastor Rob back to the airport!" I really think Nathan, a second year student at Luther Seminary, was more concerned about getting Pastor Kinnear to and from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport than he was about his Endorsement Panel. I said, "Well, that's good, but how did your panel go?" He said, "I really enjoyed it!"

I thought back to my seminary days. I had not really enjoyed any of my "hurdle" interviews. It seemed to me that an awful lot of my future depended on them, so I was pretty nervous going into each one of them.

In those days, the church (the American Lutheran Church in my case) entrusted the seminary with approving candidates for ordination. Today, there is a better partnership between our seminaries and candidacy committees throughout the ELCA. Pastor Barb Rapp, assistant to the bishop for candidacy, has often said that in our synod she works with the best candidacy committee in the church. For my son, Pastor Kinnear's presence was like having a visitor from home rather than an interrogator of the Spanish Inquisition. In our candidacy committee, my son senses the partnership he shares with them in his preparation for ordained ministry.

The candidacy process in the ELCA is of vital importance, but the work of candidacy committees is often quiet and behind the scenes. If I were not the father of a seminarian and a pastor of the church, I would probably be unaware of the sacrifices that members of multi-synodical candidacy committees make in order to do their work, including seminary visits for endorsement and approval panels. We owe our thanks to those who serve our synod and church in this way. And, we should all be familiar with their work because we make it possible through our Mission Support.

Please convey the thanks of the church to your congregation for its Mission Support! Together we are making Christ known and preparing leaders for the future. Please share the stories of who we are together.

Living in God's amazing grace,

Pastor Jeffrey Clements

Pastor Jeffrey Clements
Assistant to the Bishop/Stewardship Specialist