

CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PASTORS

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NALC

North American Lutheran Church

Executive Council  
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## CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PASTORS

### North American Lutheran Church

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This process is for ordained pastors and commissioned lay leaders who would like to be certified as leaders in the NALC. The process for pastors in various situations is listed below and the process for commissioned lay leaders is at the bottom of the page.

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#### PASTOR UNDER CALL TO A CONGREGATION

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A pastor serving a congregation that indicates its intention to join the North American Lutheran Church (see the Affiliation process for congregations) who wants to come into the NALC with the congregation shall contact the general secretary.

1. The pastor will submit a copy of the letter of call from the congregation.
2. The pastor will request a letter of reference from the president/vice president of the congregation where the pastor presently serves; this letter will address the pastor's gifts for ministry and other comments as may be appropriate.
3. The pastor, with the assistance of the general secretary, will submit a copy of a criminal background check, typically using the contract developed by the NALC.
4. The general secretary will interview the pastor either face-to-face or by other means. Depending on circumstances, the general secretary may appoint a panel of three persons to conduct the interview. The interview will include such matters as the pastor's experience and reflection on ministry, agreement with the constitution and confession of faith of the NALC, support for the goals and intentions of the NALC, whether the pastor has been charged with sexual or financial misconduct and other matters as may be appropriate.
5. Following the interview, the general secretary will make a recommendation to the executive council of the NALC regarding the pastor's status in the NALC. The executive council will take action on the recommendation.
6. The general secretary will notify the pastor of the executive council's action. If the action is favorable, the pastor may inform the ELCA synodical bishop. The general secretary of the NALC will communicate the action of the executive council to the ELCA Board of Pensions, if appropriate.

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#### PASTOR IN RETIREMENT

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When a retired pastor wishes to be listed within the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), the pastor shall contact the general secretary.

1. The pastor will submit a copy of the ordination certificate or some other document that will attest that the pastor is an ordained minister within the Lutheran Church.
2. The pastor will submit a letter of reference from someone who knows the pastor's ministry; this letter will address the pastor's gifts for ministry and other comments as may be appropriate.
3. The pastor, with the assistance of the general secretary, will submit a copy of a criminal background check, typically using the contract developed by the NALC.

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4. The general secretary will interview the pastor either face to face or by other means. Depending on circumstances, the general secretary may appoint a panel of three persons to conduct the interview. The interview will include such matters as the pastor's experience and reflection on ministry, agreement with the constitution and confession of faith of the NALC, support for the goals and intentions of the NALC, whether the pastor has been charged with sexual or financial misconduct and other matters as may be appropriate.
5. Following the interview, the general secretary will make a recommendation to the executive council of the NALC regarding the pastor's status in the NALC. The executive council will take action on the recommendation.
6. The general secretary will notify the pastor of the executive council's action. If the action is favorable, the pastor may inform the ELCA synodical bishop. The general secretary of the NALC will communicate the action of the executive council to the ELCA Board of Pensions, if appropriate.
7. At some point during the above process, the pastor will become a member of an NALC congregation. In certain cases the pastor may be a congregational member of another Lutheran church whose confession of faith and practice are deemed to be compatible with that of the NALC, as determined by the executive council.

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### PASTOR ON LEAVE FROM CALL OR PREVIOUSLY ROSTERED IN ANOTHER CHURCH

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When a pastor on leave from call, or previously rostered in another Lutheran church, wishes to serve within the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), the pastor shall contact the general secretary.

1. The pastor will submit a copy of the ordination certificate or some other document that will attest that the pastor is an ordained minister within the Lutheran Church.
2. The pastor will submit a letter of reference from a person of the pastor's choice; this letter will address the pastor's gifts for ministry and other comments as may be appropriate.
3. The pastor, with the assistance of the general secretary, will submit a copy of a criminal background check, typically using the contract developed by the NALC.
4. The general secretary will interview the pastor either face to face or by other means. Depending on circumstances, the general secretary may appoint a panel of three persons to conduct the interview. The interview will include such matters as the pastor's experience and reflection on ministry, agreement with the constitution and confession of faith of the NALC, support for the goals and intentions of the NALC, and other matters as may be appropriate. The interview will explore whether and under what circumstances the pastor may be available for call within the NALC.
5. Following the interview, the general secretary will make a recommendation to the executive council of the NALC regarding the pastor's status in the church. The executive council will take action on the recommendation.
6. The general secretary will notify the pastor of the executive council's action. If the action is favorable, the pastor may inform the ELCA synodical bishop or the leadership of the pastor's previous ministry.

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7. At some point during the above process, the pastor will become a member of an NALC congregation. In certain cases the pastor may be a congregational member of another Lutheran church whose confession of faith and practice are deemed to be compatible with that of the NALC, as determined by the executive council.

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### PASTOR UNDER CALL TO SPECIAL MINISTRY

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When a pastor under call to special ministry wishes to serve within the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), the pastor shall contact the general secretary.

1. The pastor will submit a copy of the current letter of call.
2. The pastor will request a letter of reference from the supervisor of the pastor's current ministry. This letter will address the pastor's gifts for ministry and other comments as may be appropriate.
3. The pastor, with the assistance of the general secretary, will submit a copy of a criminal background check, typically using the contract developed by the NALC.
4. The general secretary will interview the pastor either face to face or by other means. Depending on circumstances, the general secretary may appoint a panel of three persons to conduct the interview. The interview will include such matters as the pastor's experience and reflection on ministry, agreement with the constitution and confession of faith of the NALC, support for the goals and intentions of the NALC, whether the pastor has been charged with sexual or financial misconduct and other matters as may be appropriate.
5. Following the interview, the general secretary will make a recommendation to the executive council of the NALC regarding the pastor's status in the NALC. The executive council will take action on the recommendation.
6. The general secretary will notify the pastor of the executive council's action. If the action is favorable, the pastor may inform the ELCA synodical bishop. The general secretary of the NALC will communicate the action of the executive council to the ELCA Board of Pensions, if appropriate.
7. At some point during the above process the pastor will become a member of an NALC congregation. In certain cases the pastor may be a congregational member of another Lutheran church whose confession of faith and practice are deemed to be compatible with the NALC, as determined by the executive council.

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### LAY MINISTERS:

#### ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY, DIACONAL MINISTER, DEACONESS, OTHER LAY VOCATION

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When a person in a lay vocation wishes to be certified within the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church, that person shall contact the general secretary for certification. The processes for certifying an ordained minister will apply to a person in lay vocation, although the steps may be modified depending on circumstances.

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