



CERTIFICATION OF ORDAINED PASTORS

All ordained clergy wishing to be certified as pastors in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) will:

Step 1. Complete and submit the following to the NALC General Secretary

- Application for Certification in the NALC
- Release and payment for background check in U.S. or background check from RCMP in Canada
- Copy of ordination certificate
- Copy of most recent letter of call
- Reference letter(s) from former council/congregational president. (Use our form please.)
- Reference letter from colleague in ministry (pastor, deaconess, etc.)
- Reference letter from current (or former) judicatory official (bishop, assistant, dean, etc.) If this is not possible due to your current ministry situation (i.e. Leaving a denomination) then a second letter from a colleague will suffice.
- Living and Serving in the NALC Signature page — acceptance of NALC Constitution and compliance with NALC Ministry Standards
- Current photo
- Psychological Evaluation through Crossroads Counseling, Columbus, Ohio (General Secretary will set this up for you. The NALC will pay all fees associated with this evaluation.)

After all the Documents are Received

Once we have all of your documents, the vetting team will review everything, especially your essays. It is normal to receive feedback from the team and for them to ask for clarification on questions.

Once the vetting team is satisfied with the submitted materials, the mission district dean in your geographical location will contact you for an in person (or zoom) interview.

When we receive a letter from the dean recommending you for certification (or colloquy) your name will be forwarded to the Executive Council for approval. You will be notified by email when this occurs.

Upon approval by the Executive Council, you may then be in consultation with the NALC's Call Process Coordinator, Pastor Shelly Schultz: sschultz@thenalc.org for assistance with the call process. **PLEASE** do not proceed with a call until all steps are completed, and you have been approved by the EC. We will notify when you are approved.

Colloquy Applications

Pastors applying to Colloquy (non-Lutheran pastors who desire to join the NALC from another tradition) are required to take **4 courses** from one of our NALS Network Seminaries: Lutheran Confessions, Creeds and Catechisms, Homiletics in the Lutheran Tradition, Lutheran Reformation History.

Once you have successfully completed 3 out of 4 of the courses, and the requirements listed above, you may begin the call process.

We also require a video course on Lutheran Worship (this is a free course, not for credit).

Step 2. Prepare and submit written answers to the following questions:

(Pay attention to spelling and grammar. Please proofread your essays before submitting them.)

Biblical and Theological Questions

Write in your own words, as if you were answering the questions in an adult Bible study/education class. Limit your response to each question to a couple of paragraphs and keep quotations to a minimum. If you do quote materials other than your own, please use quotation marks to denote the beginning/end of the quoted material and cite your reference.

1. Have you read and studied the Book of Concord? What is the meaning and value of the Book of Concord for ministry today?
2. How do you understand the Bible as the Word of God?
3. Are you willing to preach and teach the Word of God according to the Lutheran Confessions? How do the Lutheran Confessions shape your ministry? Give concrete examples, if possible?
4. What is the meaning of the distinction between Law and Gospel? How does the Lutheran understanding of Law and Gospel shape your preaching?
5. Explain the Lutheran understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Include some discussion of who may be admitted to the Lord's Supper, i.e. the baptized, unbaptized, believers, etc.

6. What does it mean to say that one is “reborn of water and the Spirit?”
7. What is the Lutheran teaching concerning the nature of the Church?
8. Explain the understanding that a baptized person is both sinner and saint simultaneously.
9. The Christian tradition confesses that God is one in three Persons; and that Christ is both divine and human. Please explain these teachings.
10. The four Core Values of the North American Lutheran Church are: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused. How are these values consistent with your personal identity as a pastor of the church and your leadership within a congregation?
11. The Scriptures teach that marriage is a holy estate ordained by God, joining one man and one woman. Explain your understanding of the NALC position on marriage, and how this will shape your pastoral practice as a NALC pastor.

Personal and Ministry Questions

Please be advised that the initial non-disclosure of important personal information and ministerial circumstances (i.e. divorce, request of resignation from a call, etc.) may result in nullification of your certification if made known or discovered at a later date.

1. Describe your parish/congregational experience in the congregations you have served: What did you learn? How did it go? Would you characterize it as fulfilling, challenging, joyful, depressing, etc.? How did each of your calls end? Positively? On a negative note? Did you leave voluntarily? How would members of previous congregations remember your ministry among them?
2. What are your greatest strengths in ministry? Your weaknesses?
3. What is your understanding of pastoral leadership? What are the three most important aspects of pastoral leadership? Is your leadership style more cooperative or authoritarian — or somewhere in-between?
4. What is your personality type? Introverted/extroverted? More interested in facts or feelings? Easily able to communicate/bond with people or needing time to develop relationships? Do you enjoy many acquaintances or focus on a few deep friendships?
5. How do you understand decision-making in the congregation? What is the pastor’s role in decision-making? How does the pastor relate to the council and officers of the congregation?
6. How do you address conflict in the congregation? Have you had experience with congregational conflict? What have you learned from this experience?
7. Explain your understanding of the “call” of the Lutheran pastor.

8. How do you approach the worship life of a congregation, keeping in mind the frequency of Holy Communion, various “styles” of worship, concerns for the cohesiveness of the congregation's mission, and your pastoral attention to those who disagree with worship decisions?
9. How do you manage your time each week, and maintain a balance between work and time off?
10. Describe your routine of praying and abiding in Scripture for your personal devotions, apart from the study of Scripture for sermon preparation or Bible study classes.
11. Provide the names and locations of your undergraduate college and seminary, and list in chronological order the congregations you have served, and all other positions or jobs you have held. Include the beginning and ending dates of your service at each congregation/ministry/job.
12. The NALC’s Standards for Pastoral Ministry normally do not allow pastors divorced more than once to apply for certification. Three or more divorces preclude a pastor from applying. Have you been divorced? If yes, how many times? Provide the beginning and ending date of your marriage or marriages. Explain the circumstances that led to divorce. Include information about marital and personal counseling if applicable.
13. Have you ever been accused or convicted of a crime? Have you ever been accused or convicted of criminal and/or inappropriate sexual conduct involving a minor or adult? Have you been accused or convicted of financial malfeasance or been involved in situations of domestic violence? Please answer specifically all questions listed here.
14. Have you ever been convicted of a DUI? Have you received treatment and/or have you recovered from any addiction (alcohol, drugs, etc.)? If yes, please indicate circumstances.
15. What characteristics of the NALC are most appealing to you?
16. Do you have any questions for the NALC leadership?

The General Secretary oversees this process.

Upload your documents [HERE](#). (Note that we need your name before you can upload documents to AirTable.)

Or, you may email your documents to certification@thenalc.org