

*Congregations of the ELCA are tasked with calling forth ministry leaders to be pastors and deacons. Congregations of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod hope that you will take an active interest in helping to call forth new ministers to serve the whole Church.*

## Calling Forth Gifts for Ministry

How do you describe the qualities of a pastor or other ministry leader? What gifts do they bring for ministry?

Many pastors say they pursued the vocation of ministry after other people just like you named their gifts or invited them to consider, “Have you ever thought about being a pastor?” When you name someone’s gifts for ministry, this is the Holy Spirit at work. You are participating in building up the body of Christ, the Church!

- Some gifts for ministry you may recognize:
- Openly expresses love for Jesus
- Cares deeply for the well-being of others
- Communicates well
- Enjoys teaching
- Shows leadership in the congregation
- Works well with all ages, visiting with seniors, chatting with children, and going deep with youth and young adults
- Builds community, bringing people together for a common purpose

What other gifts are important in a pastor or ministry leader? Whom do you know that exhibits these gifts? Have you told them? If you haven’t, what’s holding you back?

All of us are to seek out and inspire gifted people in our congregations and communities to consider a call to the ministry of the gospel. If you know someone who shows a gift for ministry, create opportunities for them to serve and grow. The Holy Spirit uses all of us to call forth those who serve Christ’s church as ministers.



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## Meet a C/SIS Ministry Candidate

### The Call to Serve — Kevin Eack



While serving in law enforcement for nearly 30 years, I had thought of serving in the ministry. I had seen chaplains serving in police departments, hospitals and in other roles. As I was nearing my retirement, a few peers were going into the ministry. I asked one of them what motivated him to do it. He said, “Think about it, Kevin, in law enforcement we often

see people on the worst day of their lives, when their loved one has been slain, killed in an accident, or when they are being arrested. In ministry you often find yourself at those same life events. We are just serving in a different role.” I had never thought of it that way.

Losing my first wife to cancer in 2014 was very difficult for our family. It was a three-year battle with many ups and downs. Sometimes a chaplain would come by during her treatments. Their visits were often helpful, but sometimes not so much. I thought, what a difficult calling that must be for them.

Upon moving to Peoria in 2018, we found our church home at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Washington, Illinois. Two pastors there, in separate conversations, asked me if I had ever considered the ministry. I found these conversations both heartwarming and terrifying.

In both discussions, I confessed I had considered it, but never considered myself worthy of such a path. But after giving it careful thought, discussing it with my wife and praying upon it for weeks, I decided to pursue the path of Word and Service. Of course, I had many questions.

Now completing my first year in seminary, I still have questions of course. But I have a lot more confidence that I am on the right path. Like in law enforcement, I heard the call and I answered. We shall see where it takes me. Thank you for the opportunity.

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