

Status of Candidates for Ordination Assigned February 1998

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February 17, 1999

In February 1998, 232 candidates for ordination were assigned. This number includes candidates going through a “normal route” plus candidates coming through the alternate route, coming from other church bodies, and individuals being reinstated to the roster after being off the roster. Typically, there are other candidates receiving administrative assignment. These candidates are not included in these numbers.

For us to know if one of these assigned candidates has received a call, the synod must have submitted a report of the call to the ELCA Office of the Secretary. **We went through all reports received by January 20, 1999 and included that information in this report.** We can continue to trace these candidates and find out when they get ordained at a future date.

Chart 1 shows the total number of candidates ordained by each month starting in June 1998. Large numbers of candidates were ordained in June, July, and August and the numbers dropped off quickly at that time. **By January 20, 1999, 175 candidates (75%) had been reported as called by the synods. There were 57 candidates who had yet to be reported as called.**

Of the 175 candidates called, **107 (62%) were called as sole pastors and 65 (38%) were called to staff ministries. There were also two candidates called to be missionaries and one candidate called to be Assistant to the Bishop. Also, 141 (82%) were called to serve one congregation, 27 (16%) were called to serve two congregations, and four (2%) were called to serve three congregations.** Looking at the community context of these congregations, **51% of these congregations were located in community contexts described as rural and small town (population less than 10,000).** This follows the pattern for all ELCA congregations in which 51% are also found in rural and small town contexts. The remaining 49% are located in more urban contexts.

Table 1 shows summary statistics for the congregations that called candidates assigned in February 1998. **For the 31 calls that involved two or three congregations, the statistics were summed to create a total for all congregations.** Table 1 describes baptized membership, average weekly worship attendance, regular giving, designated giving, current operating expenses, debt expenses, and mission support for the 104 congregations calling sole pastors and the 65 congregations calling a pastor as part of a multiple staff. The percentiles show the number below which that percentage of congregations fall. The minimum and maximum give the range for each statistic. Three congregations calling sole pastors have not yet filed a congregational report form and are not included in this analysis.

Looking first at congregations calling sole pastors, **the minimums of 82 baptized members, average worship attendance of 16, regular giving of \$21,859 and current operating expenses**

of \$7,090, show the smallest situations into which candidates were called. Ten percent (about 10 congregations) of the solo pastor calls were to congregations with 133 baptized members or less, average weekly worship attendance of 54 or less, regular giving of \$43,302 or less, current operating expenses of \$35,953 or less and mission support of \$1,745 or less. The 20th percentile describes statistics below which 20% of these first call congregations fall. It's hard to make a clear determination of when a congregation can adequately afford to call a pastor, but some of these statistics look quite low. **The 90th percentile also indicates that the largest 10% of congregations calling solo first call pastors had 499 baptized members or more, average weekly worship attendance of 145 or more, regular giving of \$100,689 or more and current operating expenses of \$91,752 or more.**

Looking at the statistics calling a candidate into a multiple staff situation, these numbers are much larger because it takes more members and dollars to justify calling several pastors. The minimum numbers for these congregations were 186 baptized members, average weekly worship attendance of 73, regular giving of \$34,554, and current operating expenses of \$98,564. The 90th percentile also indicates that the largest 10% of congregations calling first call pastors into a multiple staff situation had 2,910 baptized members or more, average weekly worship attendance of 739 or more, regular giving of \$792,332 or more and current operating expenses of \$755,884 or more.

There are several questions raised by these results. The first is **if the need for candidates was so high, why have only 75% of the candidates been called 11 months later?** A variety of hypotheses have been expressed including (1) the candidates still waiting have restrictions on where they will go, (2) there are problems in the "deployment system" making it hard to create good matches between candidates and calls, (3) many of the available calls are financially marginal making it hard to call candidates, etc.

Chart 2 compares the percentages of candidates ordained by January 20, 1999 with restrictions and with no restrictions. **The data show that candidates with restrictions are less likely to be ordained 11 months later than candidates with no restrictions.** There is one hypothesis that candidates with restrictions generally want to stay near the seminary they are attending. Table 2 shows the synods with candidates still waiting for calls, broken down by whether the candidates placed restrictions on their call. **Six of the still uncalled candidates with restrictions are assigned to synods near an ELCA seminary while 16 are not.** Restricted candidates are not concentrated in any one part of the ELCA. Sixteen synods have one waiting restricted candidate and three synods have two waiting restricted candidates. **Overall, candidates still waiting for calls are widely distributed across the ELCA, including both urban and rural synods.**

The financial viability of congregations to call a pastor is difficult to understand. Having a parsonage can add quite a bit to a compensation package without adding to current operating expenses. Calls can be part-time with remaining time used for other employment, chaplaincy work, etc. Costs of living also vary for different parts of the country. In an earlier study of first calls accepted between 1988 and 1995, 36% of the respondents reported compensation below synod salary guidelines. **The data in Table 1 provide some indications that congregations**

calling candidates assigned in February 1998 are likely to find it difficult to provide compensation meeting synod salary guidelines to their new pastor. A study managed by the Division for Ministry is being conducted to better understand these types of calls and their impact on the deployment of clergy in the future.

Finally, if the demand for candidates was so high, why do we have so many candidates still looking for calls 11 months later? In addition to the 22 candidates with restrictions, there are 35 candidates with no restrictions who still have no call.

**Chart 1 Cumulative Percent of Candidates
Assigned February 1998 Who Have Been Reported
to be Ordained as of January 20, 1999**

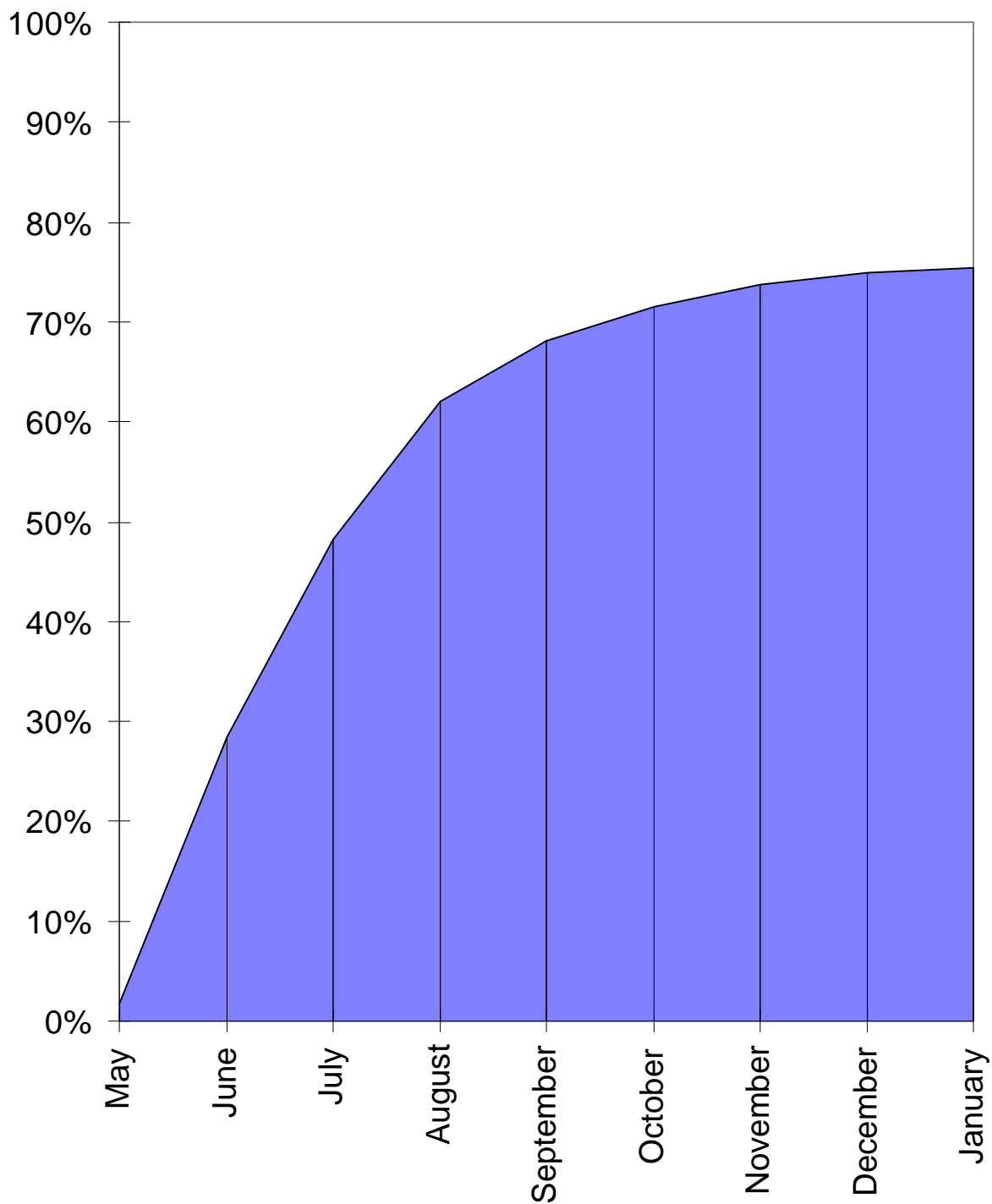


Table 1 Characteristics of First Call Congregations for Candidates Assigned February 1998

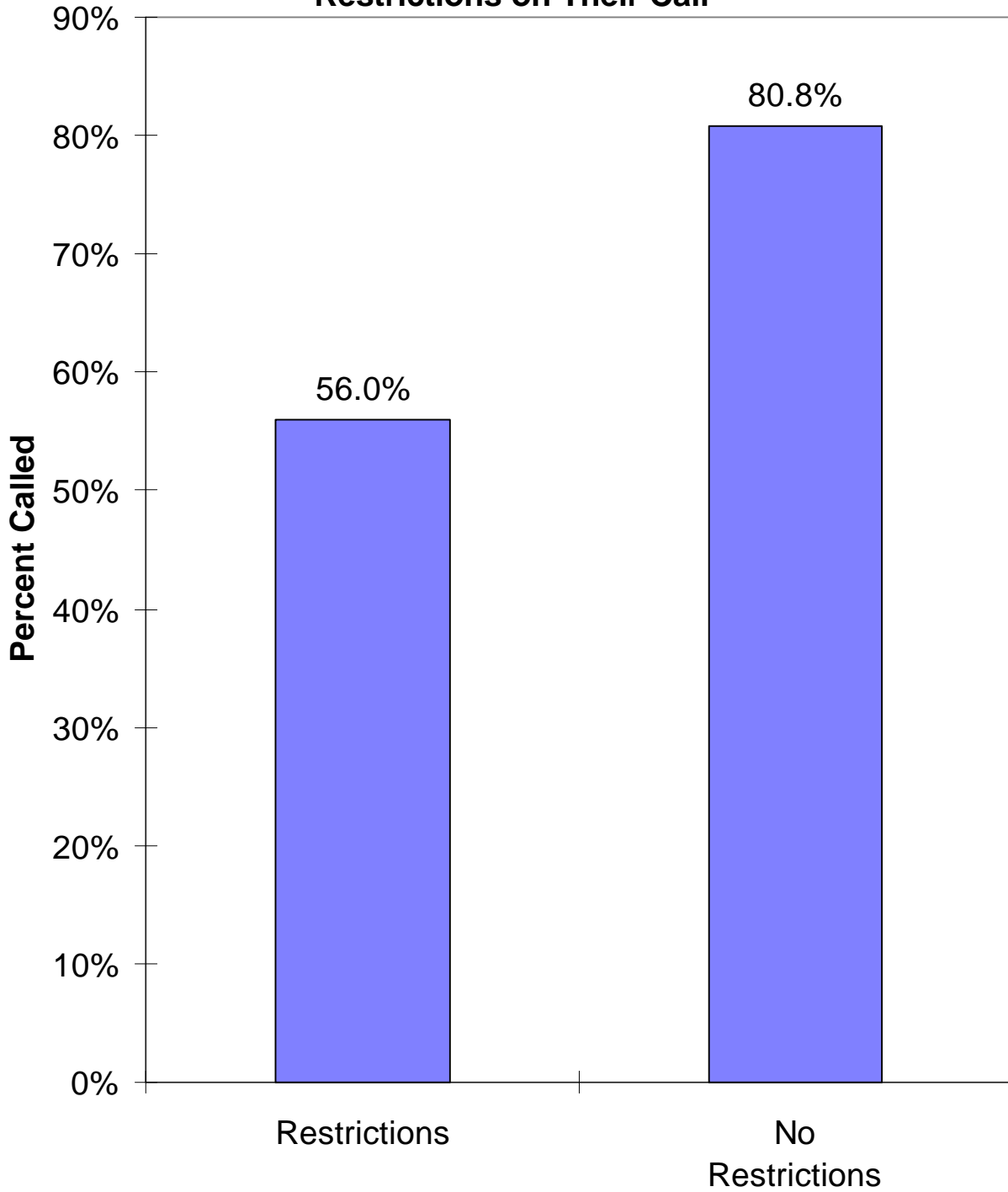
104 Sole Pastors

	Baptized Members	Average Attendance	Regular Giving	Designated Giving	Current Operating Expenses	Debt Expenses	Mission Support
Average	300.6	94.2	\$71,715	\$10,075	\$66,223	\$5,388	\$6,182
Median	284.5	86.5	\$66,828	\$6,069	\$64,798	\$0	\$4,720
Minimum	82	16	\$21,859	\$0	\$7,090	\$0	\$0
Maximum	624	203	\$226,158	\$84,591	\$171,571	\$79,042	\$30,286
Percentiles							
10%	133	54	\$43,302	\$0	\$35,953	\$0	\$1,745
20%	186	65	\$50,233	\$930	\$44,437	\$0	\$2,528
30%	220	71	\$58,211	\$1,755	\$52,136	\$0	\$3,500
40%	260	78	\$63,295	\$3,554	\$60,095	\$0	\$4,110
50%	284	86	\$66,828	\$6,069	\$64,798	\$0	\$4,720
60%	311	97	\$69,555	\$8,325	\$70,196	\$0	\$6,000
70%	357	106	\$77,756	\$10,702	\$76,355	\$1,321	\$7,093
80%	411	124	\$86,509	\$18,459	\$85,072	\$7,000	\$8,632
90%	499	145	\$100,689	\$26,980	\$91,752	\$17,372	\$11,993

65 Multiple Staff Pastors

	Baptized Members	Average Attendance	Regular Giving	Designated Giving	Current Operating Expenses	Debt Expenses	Mission Support
Average	1378	414.5	\$391,269	\$91,569	\$340,170	\$41,114	\$34,047
Median	1028	314	\$318,136	\$39,449	\$261,616	\$19,958	\$25,284
Minimum	186	73	\$34,554	\$2,378	\$98,564	\$0	\$0
Maximum	5659	1524	\$1,138,336	\$931,408	\$1,250,495	\$357,814	\$110,000
Percentiles							
10%	486	194	\$149,114	\$8,203	\$126,344	\$0	\$7,505
20%	686	235	\$189,985	\$18,485	\$165,330	\$0	\$12,916
30%	814	264	\$238,671	\$25,335	\$196,441	\$5,223	\$18,182
40%	932	292	\$291,315	\$31,628	\$232,025	\$10,362	\$23,039
50%	1028	314	\$318,136	\$39,449	\$261,616	\$19,958	\$25,284
60%	1238	351	\$374,256	\$50,719	\$314,368	\$33,033	\$32,393
70%	1519	409	\$456,720	\$72,448	\$393,111	\$47,917	\$40,020
80%	2081	602	\$568,945	\$96,185	\$476,449	\$71,011	\$52,964
90%	2910	739	\$792,332	\$293,022	\$755,884	\$95,871	\$74,328

Chart 2 Percentage of Candidates for Ordination Assigned February 1998 Who Were Called by January 20, 1999 Based on Whether They Placed Restrictions on Their Call



**Table 2 Candidates for Ordination Assigned February 1998 Not Reported
as Called by January 20, 1999**

Synod	Not		Total
	Restricted	Restricted	
1B Northwest Washington Synod		1	1
1D Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod	1		1
2A Sierra Pacific Synod	1	1	2
2B Southern California (West) Synod	1		1
2D Grand Canyon Synod	1		1
3A Western North Dakota Synod		1	1
3B Eastern North Dakota Synod		1	1
3C South Dakota Synod	3		3
3F Southwestern Minnesota Synod	3		3
3G Minneapolis Area Synod		1	1
3H Saint Paul Area Synod		1	1
3I Southeastern Minnesota Synod		1	1
4B Central States Synod	1		1
4E Southwestern Texas Synod	1	1	2
5A Metropolitan Chicago Synod	3		3
5B Northern Illinois Synod	1		1
5C Central/Southern Illinois Synod	1		1
5D Southeastern Iowa Synod	1	1	2
5F Northeastern Iowa Synod	1		1
5H Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	1	1	2
5J Greater Milwaukee Synod		1	1
5L LaCrosse Area Synod	1		1
6D Northwestern Ohio Synod		1	1
6F Southern Ohio Synod	1		1
7B New England Synod	1		1
7C Metropolitan New York Synod	3	2	5
7E Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod	1	2	3
7F Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod	3		3
8D Lower Susquehanna Synod		1	1
8E Upper Susquehanna Synod	1		1
8F Delaware-Maryland Synod		1	1
9A Virginia Synod		1	1
9B North Carolina Synod	1		1
9C South Carolina Synod	1	1	2
9D Southeastern Synod	1	2	3
9F Caribbean Synod	1		1
Total	35	22	57