



Sample Interview Questions

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive, but merely suggests issues you might want to raise with the candidate in areas connected with parish life. **Select 8-10 questions** that will shape the primary part of the interview.

Preaching/Worship Leadership

1. Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service on Sunday morning.
2. Think back in your ministry and tell me about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
3. Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.

Social Ministry

1. Tell me how you evaluate community needs and community strengths.
2. Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life in your community.
3. Describe how you go about motivating members of your congregation to respond to community needs.

Administration

1. Describe the steps you take normally when working with groups to achieve consensus or cohesiveness.
2. How would you describe your style of leadership in overseeing the work of the congregation?
3. Tell me about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.

Teaching

1. How do you evaluate the faith development of others?
2. Describe your approach to helping adults to grow in their faith.
3. Describe your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith.

Stewardship

1. Describe how you have helped others grow in their personal stewardship.
2. In what ways have you helped members understand the management of their money and their responsibilities as Christian stewards?
3. Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.

Evangelism/Mission

1. Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
2. What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?
3. Describe how you have achieved a multicultural approach to your ministry.

Inter-personal Climate

1. What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
2. When pressure mounts, how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
3. Describe an experience where conflict arose between you and another person and how resolution was finally achieved.

Ministry in Crisis

1. Describe your style of ministry to persons in crisis.
2. Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
3. How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?



Interpret Theology

1. Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
2. Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
3. What resources do you use to remain theologically and Biblically fresh and current?

Innovation/Creativity

1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
3. Think back in your ministry and describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.

Participant in the Larger Church

1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.
2. Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies, and institutions.
3. Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

Personal Growth

1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
3. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Call to Ministry

1. Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
2. Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.
3. In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?

Questions Candidates May Ask

An effective interview is a two-way street, with the candidate also bringing questions and concerns. Allow time and opportunity for the candidate to ask questions and be prepared to address them. Questions that may be asked of you as a committee:

1. What is the focus of your congregation? Describe your mission.
2. What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?
3. How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
4. In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?
5. What long- and short-term goals has the congregation adopted? When was the last time an in-depth self study was conducted?
6. What is the congregation's commitment to support of and partnership with the synod and the ELCA?
7. How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?
8. What part should family members of staff play in the congregation?
9. What would you display on a highway billboard regarding your congregation?
10. Why did the previous pastor leave?
11. Are there skeletons in the closet that I should know about in considering the call here?