

## **Psychological Evaluation and Career Consultation**

*Confidential: Candidacy use only by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)*

*Note: The results are considered valid until April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026*

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Name: Noah Holland

DOB: 03/06/1997

Date of Assessment: 4/12/2025

Psychologist: Bjorn Hanson, PhD (WI License: 3202-57)

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### **Assessment Overview**

Referral: Noah was referred for psychological evaluation and career consultation by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin as part of Noah's candidacy process.

Sources of information:

- 1) Clinical interview on 4/12/2025
- 2) Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-3 (MMPI-3)
- 3) 16PF 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Questionnaire
- 4) Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS)
- 5) PHQ-9
- 6) GAD-7

### **Personality and Interest Testing Results**

**MMPI-3:** Validity scales were within normal limits and did not suggest over-reporting, under-reporting, or random responding. Results were suggestive of some unusual thoughts and perceptual experiences, though this did not suggest any pathology upon interview. Results were suggestive of moments of being excitable with high energy without indication of any concerns with a mood disorder. Results suggested above average health, below average stress, and no concerns with anxiety, depression, or anger. Results suggest having a high opinion of oneself, seeing oneself as having brilliant ideas, and seeking recognition for his achievements. Results suggest holding strong opinions, being assertive, and being able to lead others, though results suggest that others may perceive him to be domineering. These traits suggest the need for further exploration, and on interview Noah expressed self-awareness and humility in such a way that these traits came off more as confidence than arrogance.

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**PHQ-9 and GAD-7:** Neither scale was indicative of clinically significant, current concerns with anxiety or depression.

**16PF:** Overall, results suggest that Noah has accentuated traits of being independent, persuasive, and eager to challenge the status quo. Results suggest an inclination towards being around other people, feeling comfortable in social settings, and not having issues with anxiety. Noah will likely be perceived as genuine and forthright. Results suggest that he is generally comfortable with self-disclosure, relating to others through his own experiences. Results suggest having a typical amount of trust in himself and others, without concerns of being overly guarded, trusting, or doubting. Results suggest that Noah can be assertive to the point of being willful, which may straddle a line between being confident and controlling. Noah's results suggest that he is willing to go against the grain of current thought, thinking through problems in an abstract, idealized manner before considering practical limitations. He tends to be slightly more cautious and serious than most people. When making decisions, Noah will likely be organized and more focused on objective problems rather than emotional or sentimental factors. Results suggest that Noah can take difficulties in stride. Results suggest that Noah will likely be bored with traditional ways of work, desiring to have a chance to experiment and explore new ways of doing things while still having high self-standards. Regarding making decisions, results suggest that Noah typically prefers to make decisions on his own so it will be important for him to identify times when he should ask for help (note: on interview, Noah gave good examples of when to make unilateral versus committee based decisions).

**CISS:** Noah's profile suggests confidence in his abilities across a wide range of occupations. Results suggest high perceived confidence and skill in leadership, politicking, and public speaking, along with exceptional perceived skills with managing finances and being a religious leader. His profile suggests that he also enjoys being physically active and is rather brave and adventurous. Noah's self-report suggests an ability to produce and cultivate the physical world as well, such as skills with farming and mechanics. Noah has relatively less interest in the arts, developing programming for children or adults, supervising, or overseeing marketing campaigns. Overall, this profile suggests that Noah is most interested in and comfortable with roles that would involve being a publicly facing religious leader who is responsible for budgets and the general mission of the church, and less interested in building specific programming, managing details, or supervising others. Roles that allow him to be active or to produce tangible products may be especially good fits for his skills and interests. Results suggest a

somewhat extraverted personality type, which suggests confidence in being in interpersonally facing roles.

### **ELCA Criteria for Candidacy**

#### ***Personal Identity, Level of Awareness, and Self-Concept***

Noah described a personal identity that originally was in reference to his twin brother who became disabled because of an illness, as well as a traumatic experience from childhood, though over his life that identity shifted towards being a leader and an ambassador of Jesus, with the message of welcoming everyone as they are and loving your neighbor as yourself. Noah sees himself as a transformational leader, wanting to work with church communities to become more mission focused and intentional with their outreach. He views himself as someone who fights for the underdog and turns people away from sin. When Noah recounted his time completing missionary work in Alaska, he demonstrated good awareness of the cultural context that he was entering into, both in terms of respecting First Nations' culture and understanding the harm that had come from previous missionaries that sought to assimilate the community. Noah was thoughtful about his areas for growth, including needing to learn more about ELCA-Lutheran theology and being a "people pleaser". Throughout the interview, Noah was able to self-reflect and seemed open to learn about himself and learn about how he impacts others.

#### ***Quality of Past and Present Family Relationships***

Noah was born and raised in southern Minnesota in a rural area. He had a twin brother who, due to an illness, developed special needs at a young age. To ease the burden on his parents, Noah moved in with his grandfather and lived with him until his grandfather's death when Noah was 10. Noah described feeling estranged from his parents during these early years because they did not spend much time with him. Noah stated that many decisions in his life have been based on what was best for his brother, and that he met many interesting people while visiting his brother in the hospital, which taught him early on to be open-minded and be aware that many people in the world are suffering or stressed in a manner similar to his family.

During these early years in elementary school and middle school, Noah was abused by the church's pastor. After his pastor's arrest in high school, he stated that it felt like he was "shutting down" and that the experience "ruined my identity" at that point in his life. In part due to this experience, Noah remarked that he looked for relationships "in the wrong way" in his late teens and early 20s. The impacts of these relationships led him to seek

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counseling, and afterwards, he met the woman who would become his wife. He describes his wife as “my saving grace” and stated that she understands him because she also has a sibling with disabilities. Noah stated that he gets along with his in-laws and appreciates them as role models. Currently, Noah lives with his wife and rescue dog. He reports a supportive marital relationship that includes support for his pursuit of ministry.

***Sense of Vision or Imaginative Ability***

Noah has a sense of the type of ministry that he wants to provide and has experience with missionary work that required creativity to make personal connections with people that were strangers to him and skeptical of his religion. Noah will likely do best in situations that call for understanding and solving tangible problems, such as learning what supportive services a community needs and providing them. Noah talks freely about his passion to extend outreach and mission beyond the local community and towards a wider mission. Outside of ministry, Noah stated that he has run his own business and helped friends start up business, showing an ability to follow through on his own vision or that of someone else. His interests also align with roles that may require more adventure or risk-taking, again underscoring his fit with mission-oriented work.

***Intellectual Capacity***

Noah completed high school and then attended a Bible School in Alaska. Afterwards, he completed a bachelor’s degree through Grand Canyon University, which was an online program, and he stated that he earned a 3.0 GPA. He stated that he prefers online learning as it allows him to complete tasks at his own pace, and that he feels comfortable and safe in these environments. Noah has also shown that he can learn skills on his own, noting that he has often chosen jobs because he was interested in learning a particular skill (e.g., starting a business; building a jet engine; learning how to be a police chaplain; how to handle emergencies). This academic and occupational background, combined with real life experience, suggests that he has sufficient intelligence to successfully complete seminary.

***Integrity***

There are no concerns with Noah’s integrity. He shared a story in which he had to make a difficult decision to report illegal activity that he became aware of, and this choice was made even at the risk of a relationship and his safety. Noah is a person who wants to do the right thing and will seek consultation if unsure about what to do in a situation.

***Emotional Maturity, Durability, Coping Ability***

Noah stated that he prides himself on being a “rock” in relationships, which fits with his self-assessment of being emotionally stable and not overly anxious. He describes his self-care as spending time with scripture as well as spending time with others. Noah’s description of his missionary work in Alaska suggests that he is quite emotionally durable, leaning on his faith to support him when living far from home. His relationship with his wife also appears to be an asset for his emotional health. Noah can prioritize during busy periods, and his willingness to do so should reduce the likelihood of burnout. Noah appears to have sufficient emotional maturity, which is highlighted by his reported willingness to take in feedback from others, his desire to learn more about himself, and his desire to pursue a Master’s in Divinity program with the understanding that he will continue to learn more about himself in the process.

***Motivation for Religious Service***

Noah’s motivation for ministry appears rooted in providing communities with what they need, both in terms of necessities of life (e.g., food banks) and faith resources. Noah is motivated to work in a church that is willing to expand its vision beyond its own community. Regarding the ELCA, Noah stated that although he was raised in a Missouri Synod church, he prefers the theology of the ELCA, especially related to its use of historical context. Noah believes in creating a church environment to meet people where they are at and allowing everyone to “come as you are”. He is drawn to the missional aspect of church, including righting the wrongs of previous Christians (e.g., previous missionaries). On a personal level, Noah views himself as a natural leader and wants to be a better pastor than what he experienced as a child. He stated that he would like to be a “transformative leader...for the health and benefit of the world, even if that’s my own little world”. And within this personal mission, he hopes to reach out to his own generation and the younger generation to engage them in church and its mission.

***Empathy and Affective Expression***

Noah presents as an empathic person with appropriate affective expression, and he was able to demonstrate this during the interview. He also has experience as a voluntary police chaplain, which would also require these skills. Noah’s self-reports of his personality match this observation, with Noah likely being perceived as warm, approachable, and willing to share his own experiences. Noah was skilled at articulating his own emotional experience as well as showing that he could understand another person’s point of view.

***Interpersonal and Relationship Skills***

Noah has a good track record of being able to use his interpersonal skills to his advantage, having success across jobs such as working in food service, camp counseling, insurance sales, missional work, and volunteer police chaplaincy. Noah's personality tends to be more dominant and bolder, though he appears to have insight into this and can make accommodations to be more approachable (e.g., using a softer voice; getting on to another person's level; modeling vulnerability). Noah is very motivated by the interpersonal nature of ministry, with a desire to learn more about people and cultures.

***History of Misconduct Related to Employment***

Noah denied any incidents of being fired, reprimanded, or investigated at work. No known behavioral problems from work history.

***History of Deviant and Pathological Maladaptation***

There are no personality characteristics suggestive of antisocial tendencies. Personality testing (i.e. MMPI-3) suggested traits related to being dominant and having an inflated sense of worth, though this was not the impression given in the interview. Noah reported some "fast relationships" in late adolescence and early adulthood, which he stated resolved because of seeing the consequences of these relationships, counseling related to past trauma, and getting into a stable relationship that has turned into a supportive marriage.

***History of Medical and Psychiatry Illness***

Noah reported a history of concussions while playing football, which has led to some recurrent headaches as an adult; he stated that he has seen a neurologist and was encouraged to take supplements. Noah is a generally active person. His only current medication is Flonase.

As a child, he experienced a few traumatic and stressful events, including drowning at age 4, abuse by a pastor from 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade, and estrangement from his parents for much of his childhood. In late high school he reported brief moments of suicidal thoughts, but after a conversation with his father these thoughts resolved and have not returned. He reported a brief period of depressed mood when returning from Alaska to take care of his brother, though he has not had any depressive periods recently. At present, he denied the persistence of post-trauma symptoms. No history of anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, thought disorders, or anger issues.

### ***History of Substance Abuse or Addictions***

Noah reported no history of alcohol or substance use problems. Reported briefly being prescribed cannabis for post-concussive headaches but due to side effects he discontinued use. Alcohol use is rare. Noah stated that he has “never had an addictive personality”.

### ***Flexibility***

Noah appears flexible in terms of being willing to try out new ideas. There are no concerns with Noah being overly impulsive or compulsive. As started earlier, Noah can prioritize, when necessary, and is willing to delay lower priority meetings or projects during busy times.

### ***Leadership Style***

When asked to describe his leadership approach, Noah said that he wouldn't ask anyone to do something that he wouldn't be willing to do himself, and ideally, he would have already had experience completing the task being assigned. He emphasized demonstrating that subordinates are valued and that he would not play favorites. When giving feedback, he stated that he starts with the assumption that others want to do their best and he would try to find positive aspects of a subordinate's work to point out first before providing feedback. In terms of decision-making, Noah was able to quickly differentiate tasks that require a committee (e.g., hiring; money management) from those that may be a unilateral decision of a pastor (e.g., holding services in inclement weather). Noah stated that he is relatively comfortable dealing with conflict or disagreements, taking the approach of trying to understand the root of a conflict, and using that conflict or disagreement as a chance for him and the other person to grow.

### **Overall Summary and Recommendations**

**Noah seeks to be a leader of a Lutheran community that takes part in meaningful, tangible acts of discipleship.** In seminary, Noah is interested in learning more about the historical context of Jesus and the scriptures, as well as how to intentionally lead a faith community. Noah's personality is currently geared towards working in rural communities that are willing to be engaged and challenged to look towards supporting their local and global neighbors.

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Based on this assessment, here are a few recommendations for the Candidacy committee to allow Noah to be most successful:

- 1) Support Noah in honing leadership skills specific to ministry, especially as it relates to motivating a congregation to take part in outreach and mission work. For example, books such as “In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership” by Henri Nouwen.
- 2) Support Noah in finding opportunities that play to his unique personal strengths and experiences, which include building relationships in new places, hands on production and creation, financial operations, and incorporating physical activity into the work of the church.
- 3) Given Noah’s natural leadership traits and approachable personality, assist Noah in the practice of putting the spotlight on others and helping others find their own gifts for discipleship. While Noah does not intend to create a “cult of personality”, this may unintentionally occur, and Noah would benefit from planning how to use his gifts to draw people in and then pivot towards empowering others so his good work can continue after he leaves a particular call or mission.
- 4) Support Noah in learning methodical, intentional systems for how to go about making changes in a new ministry context.
- 5) Noah is a survivor of abuse from a pastor, and he has sought personal and professional support for this experience. Noah is currently in good mental health, however, as Noah navigates his training to become a pastor it is possible that this experience brings up reminders and reactions related to this past trauma. Support Noah in securing mental health support if he experiences distress related to this situation and requests such support.

It was my pleasure getting to know Noah and I wish him the best in pursuing his pastoral career.

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