
What will the cost be?

The cost for each semester is \$350. Books and materials are extra. Congregations are encouraged to help with your tuition.

How do I register?

You will need to send the following to the synod office:

- Completed registration form and fee
- Recommendation signed by Church Council President and pastor

What happens when I complete the program?

- You will receive a certificate of completion.
- Your congregation will be encouraged to have a Recognition Sunday.
- You and the congregation will live out your covenant.

* Consideration is being given for continuing education opportunities for those who have completed the two year Lay School program.

You may contact any of the following Lay School of Ministry Committee members for further information or clarification:

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Western Iowa Synod's

LAY SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

anchored in 

Biblical Study,

Christian Theology,

and Christian Service

This program is sponsored by the
Western Iowa Synod with support from



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

What is the Western Iowa Synod Lay School of Ministry?

The Lay School of Ministry is an educational program which assists lay people in developing a deeper understanding of Christian identity and participation in the mission of the Church. Participants who complete this program will be more fully equipped and energized for leadership at the congregational and synodical levels. This program is not intended to assume participant authorization by the bishop for word and sacrament licensure.

Who May Attend?

Any active congregational member who is seeking a deeper understanding of the Bible and Lutheran theology, more opportunities for serving, and a deeper satisfaction in serving is welcome to participate. All participants will need a recommendation from their church council and their pastor to serve as mentor.

Where and When will LSM meet?

The year of study begins in January and consists of two semesters. Each semester begins with a retreat in January and September followed by four monthly regional gatherings where an area pastor serves as facilitator. Our goal is to have participants drive no longer than one hour to their gathering site.



What will the course of study look like?

Year one will include “core courses” taught by Chuck Gavin and Steve Smith, Professors at Waldorf College in Forest City. The professors are physically present at the retreats and have recorded video lectures for the monthly gatherings. The pastors who facilitate the regional gatherings use the videos as well as textbook readings and focused discussion questions to foster conversation and learning.



Theology—During the first semester participants will look at Christian theology in general. The readings, lectures and discussions will concentrate on four specific themes: *Scripture, Tradition, Reason* and *Experience*. In the second semester we double back and examine the same themes from an explicitly *Lutheran* perspective using specific writings of Martin Luther.

Over the two semesters students are encouraged to engage the texts and each other in a disciplined manner that will allow participants to begin to move from an *embedded theology* to their own *deliberative theology*.

Bible Survey— A year does not allow enough time to teach everything in the Bible but an attempt is made to hit the major themes and stories and to bring students into the world-wide conversation of biblical scholarship that spans the globe and denominations. Special attention is given to how the scriptures came to be and the various sorts of literature found in the scripture so that students may come to an awareness of what the Bible is and what the Bible is not. The goal is to give students tools and questions with which to approach the scriptures so that one may dig into them, discover what they may have meant for the people who first wrote them and read them, and what they may say to us in our contemporary context and lives.

Year two will offer a “Vision for Lay Leadership in the ELCA” which will offer participants a broader understanding of the Church and of themselves as leaders, as well as the opportunity to develop leadership skills in a particular area of parish ministry.



The presenter for the first retreat is Nathan Frambach, professor at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, IA. Through lecture and engaging conversation, Nathan introduces participants to the following:

- **Mission**
- **Leadership**
- **Church**
- **Personal Discernment**

During the four monthly gatherings participants will focus on each of these areas using textbook readings and guided questions. Through personal discernment participants will choose a particular area of ministry on which to focus during the second semester.

The second retreat is held in Chicago at the ELCA’s Lutheran Center. During the four monthly gatherings participants will learn more about their own particular area of ministry as well as other areas as they make presentations about the following:

- **Surf the ELCA website**
- **Critique content**
- **Attend an event**
- **Interview someone**

By the end of the semester a covenant is completed through conversation between the participant, the pastor and the church council.
