



# **Lay Pastoral Associate (LPA) Program**

*For the Church... For You*

**A Handbook for LPA Students,  
Active LPAs, and Mentors**

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## Welcome

The Montana Synod Lay Pastoral Associate (LPA) program is one way that lay men and women use their gifts in service to the Gospel through partnership with the Synod and local congregations. It is an intentional way of supporting and training leaders for the purpose of faith development and nurturing aptitude in the areas of spirituality, biblical knowledge, Church history, worship leadership, pastoral care, and the proclamation of the gospel (preaching). The LPA program also serves to connect individuals from around the synod as colleagues to support and encourage one another through the LPA journey and beyond.

## Why should I consider becoming an LPA?

Two reasons: The Church needs you. You need the Church.

Have you ever asked yourself, "What is God calling me to do right now? How can I best serve God and my neighbor? What gifts do I have that I am not using?" If so, then consider the answer to these questions now. Then consider this...

Congregations all over the world are changing. We are no longer the Church we once were. God is doing a new thing. The Church needs trained lay leaders to use their gifts in a variety of ways, such as leading worship and bible studies or giving pastoral care and teaching.

The Church has always been a place of community and a safe place to wonder about the many ways God can and does use us. We are by nature communal individuals...we need each other. Together we are the Body of Christ, created for relationship. This community is the best place to explore and hone your spiritual gifts.

## What do LPAs do?

LPAs serve as a resource for congregations. They make themselves available for pulpit supply when a pastor is gone, visit members at home and in the hospital, become assisting ministers for worship, and serve on a variety of synod and congregational committees. Some even serve long-term in a congregation during a pastoral vacancy as a Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM). Some take the course because their pastor saw gifts in them, or they simply wanted to broaden their knowledge of the Bible and the Church.

## Application to The LPA Program

Students in the LPA program are active, confirmed, communing, and contributing members of Montana Synod congregations. They are recognized as leaders by their congregations, uphold the highest standards of the Christian life, are faithful in their personal lives, and agree to live by the standards expressed in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* ([Appendix E](#)). They work closely with a mentoring ordained minister (normally the pastor of their home congregation) throughout the training process. Or by a mentor assigned by the Synod leadership.

To be considered for the LPA program, applicants and their mentors must submit the following items:

1. A written (or oral) reference from the applicant's pastor/mentor.
2. A completed application from the applicant (issued by synod after receipt of formal reference).
3. A letter of reference from the applicant's congregation council.
4. An original report from the required background check ([Appendix C](#)) completed within the last 5 years. (*Montana Synod pays the first \$25 and asks candidates to pay the remaining cost, which can vary.*)

Based on the above items, the Montana Synod determines whether an applicant may be admitted to the LPA program. Accepted applicants are expected to remit tuition (\$650 payable in two yearly installments of \$325) in a timely manner or by making arrangements with the Synod office if an installment plan is necessary.

**Age:** There are no age limitations. However, individuals must be able to complete the assigned work and be able to work with a mentor. We have had high school students and those in their 80's attend. If you have questions talk to your mentor or call the Synod office.

## LPA Curriculum & Retreats

The LPA course consists of 3 parts:

1. **4 retreats** (Spirituality, Worship, Preaching, Pastoral Care) They are held in April and October each year, beginning Friday evening through Saturday afternoon.
2. **Foundational Courses** (Old Testament, New Testament, Church History and Lutheran Theology).
3. **Mentor Guided Activities** (Planning and Leading Bible Study, Preparation for Preaching, Visitation/Prayer and Care of the Souls, Teaching the Catechism).

Each quarter (after the retreat weekends), students will have a Foundation Course to complete on their own. These are worked on one at a time, with each course expected to be completed before the next group gathering. The only exception is the first course, which students will receive in October of the first training year.

The LPA Program is designed to be finished in two years. It begins in October and ends the second year, just prior to Synod Assembly the first week in June. The candidates will be recognized at the Synod Assembly only after all the requirements have been met.

## **Retreats**

There are no good substitutes for attending the retreats, the value of which goes far beyond the practical and advertised learning that takes place while attending the session. The relationships fostered and collegially formed by coming together is as important as the education received. It is for this reason that we rarely offer a substitute for a retreat missed. Retreats are required.

### **LPA West (At the Synod House or at Ursuline Centre, Great Falls)**

- Fall, year 1: Prayer (October)
- Spring, year 1: Worship (April)
- Fall, year 2: Preaching (October)
- Spring, year 2: Pastoral Care (April)

### **LPA East (At Pella Lutheran Church, Sidney)**

- Fall, year 1: Prayer (October)
- Spring, year 1: Worship (April)
- Fall, year 2: Preaching (October)
- Spring, year 2: Pastoral Care (April)

Contact the synod office for exact dates (406-453-1461)

### ***Retreat Housing and Meals***

*All room and board is covered by your tuition.*

In Great Falls, the retreats will be held at either the Synod House (1221 24<sup>th</sup> St South) or the Ursuline Centre (2300 Central Ave). At the Ursuline, each room is dorm style with a shared bathroom. All meals are family style. Coffee, tea and light snacks are also provided during the retreat. At the Synod House, sleeping rooms may be shared and will be at the Great Falls Inn (1400 28<sup>th</sup> St. South, behind Benefis Hospital)

In Sidney, the retreats will be held at Pella Lutheran Church (418 West Main St.). *Meals and snacks will be provided. Hotel accommodations will be made in Sidney for your stay and are covered by your tuition.*

## **Foundational Courses**

Students are expected to complete courses in four areas:

1. Old Testament
2. New Testament
3. Church History
4. Lutheran Theology

The cost of these resources is included in the tuition fees. At the first retreat students will be given a flash drive that includes all the resources needed for the program.

In the back of this handbook are alternate resources should students wish to study more in depth in one of the sections. However, the cost of these options is not included in the tuition fee.

Here are the courses included in your registration cost:

## **Old Testament**

Digital presentation by Dr. Michael Chan

### **Description:**

The Old Testament is challenging literature for Christian leaders. This course will persuade students that the Old Testament is not only a helpful companion in ministry, but that it is also invaluable. All lectures are given with preaching, teaching, and pastoral care in view. These lectures will provide crucial information on Israel's history and narratives, prophetic literature, wisdom literature, and why Scripture matters in the first place.

Your instructor is Dr. Michael Chan, Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary. Dr. Chan did his Ph.D. work at Emory University and the University of Helsinki. The author of several books. Dr. Chan's research focuses on developing resources for Christian leaders, apocalyptic literature, and the prophets.

### **Details:**

- Course Introduction (18 minutes)
- Part 1: Creation, Exile, and Return (74 minutes)
- Part 2: Prophetic Imagination (62 minutes)
- Part 3: Wisdom Literature (89 minutes)
- Part 4: Why Scripture Matters (44 minutes)

## **New Testament**

An Introduction to the New Testament with Dr. James Aageson

The New Testament documents are central to the Christian faith and to historic Christianity. By ecumenical consensus among all Christian traditions, the New Testament is central to the faith, life, and worship of the Church. It is the word of God and it conveys the word of God. Even as the New Testament is central to all Christian traditions, interpretations of these texts often vary widely. This makes for a rich and fascinating tapestry of readings in the history of New Testament interpretation. This course is an introduction to the New Testament designed for a general audience and for lay people who may be preparing themselves for congregational leadership.

Notes: Jim is a Lutheran Professor.

Details: This is also included on the flash drive given to you during registration.

## **Church History**

Reformation Roots (Select Learning resource)

Each session is 20-30 minutes long and is accompanied by a study guide designed for 50-60 minutes of class time. Featured presenters include: Martin Marty, Hans Wiersma, Phil Adamo, Mark Tranvik, Mickey Mattox, Victoria Christman, Darrell Jodock, Mickey McCormick, Ron Rittgers, Robert Christman, Laurel Carrington, Kirsi Stjerna, Euan Kerr Cameron, Mark Valeri, Eric Carlson, William Cahoy and Shawn Colberg.

Session 1: From Night to Dawn: the Stage is set for the Reformation

Session 2: From bondage to Freedom: Luther Rediscovered Grace

Session 3: From Scholar to Provocateur: Luther Takes on the Church

Session 4: From Priest to Outlaw

Session 5: From Heretic to Hero

Session 6: From Scholar to Father: The Domestic Luther

Session 7: From Simple to Complex: The New Church Finds Common Ground

Bonus Session 8: Luther's Legacy

Session 9: Swiss Reformation: A Rationalist's Revolt

Session 10: Radical Reformation: Revolution and Withdrawal

Session 11: English Reformation: The Political Reformation

Session 12: The Catholic Reformation: Reaction and Renewal

Details: Please do not make copies of this resource. The Synod pays Select Learning for each copy we make.

## **Lutheran Theology 1.0**

Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling, Instructor

Even though "theology" sounds like a scary word, it is actually something we all do every day as we explore questions about how God engages our lives. Lutheran Theology 1.0 will dig down to the roots of the basic Lutheran beliefs and understandings of God's activity in our lives as well as how Christ and the Spirit work in and through the Church. We will explore central concepts of Lutheran theology like "justification by grace through faith," "gospel and law," the Word of God, and preaching and reading scripture through Lutheran lenses. This will be an introduction to Lutheran theology that is designed for a general audience. There will be some reading required, most of which will be provided to you by the program.

Text: *Lutheran Study Bible (Augsburg Fortress, 2009)*

Optional Recommended Text: *Lutheran Trump Cards* by Dave Daubert

Session 1 – Intro to Lutheran Theology: Definitions and Concepts

Optional Read: *Lutheran Trump Cards* by Dave Daubert

Session 2 – Basics of Lutheran Theology: Faith of a Child

Read: *Small and Large Catechisms* by Martin Luther

Session 3 – "Justification by Grace through Faith": What does this mean?

Read: *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Lutheran Study Bible recommended)

Session 4 – Luther's "Freedom of a Christian": The Freedom Christ Gives

Read: "The Freedom of a Christian" Part 1, paragraphs 17-69

Session 5 – Luther's "Freedom of a Christian": The Freedom of Christ We Live

Read: "The Freedom of a Christian," Part 2, paragraphs 70-125

Session 6 – Discipleship & Vocation: Following Christ into God’s World

Session 7 – The Church, Preaching, and Engaging Scripture Lutheran Style

Recommended Read: Lutheran Study Bible: pp. 9-32, 1521-1553

Session 8 – The ELCA and You: What does it mean (and not mean) to be part of the ELCA?

Read: ELCA Website, the “About” & “Faith” sections

Details: This is also included on the flash drive given to you during registration.

**Exceptions:** If a candidate has already taken a class equivalent to those offered here it may count toward the course requirements of this program. Please submit a transcript to the synod office or talk to the Bishop if you have questions.

This is the typical order of required Foundational Courses:

Year 1 – Oct-April: Intro to Old Testament

Year 1 – April-Oct: Intro to New Testament

Year 2 – Oct-April: History of Christianity (Reformation Roots)

Year 2 – April-June: Intro to Lutheran Theology

However, candidates are welcome to take classes in any order they choose. In some cases, it may take more than two years.

## **Mentor Guided Activities**

Mentoring Pastors are a key partner in the training of lay leaders through the LPA Program, assisting Montana Synod and class instructors in a student’s education and supervision. Mentor Pastors make a commitment of their time and expertise to support the equipping of lay leaders for ministry. Mentor Pastors provide individual attention and support to students as they engage in theological education and ministry practice. They provide valuable feedback both to students and the Montana Synod about a student’s development. Mentor Pastors invite and encourage students to apply what they’ve learned in their own congregational setting through experiences of leadership and of study.

A Mentor Pastor shall:

- Be an ordained minister on the roster of the Montana Synod, ELCA (or full communion partner.)
- Be approved as a Mentor Pastor by the Bishop.
- Clearly understand and be committed without reservation to the programs of the LPA.
- Be an effective model for and guide to the LPA student.
- Maintain the Mentor Pastor relationship with the student unless the relationship is terminated in consultation with the Bishop.

The responsibilities of the Mentor Pastor are as follows:

*Please note that these are **guidelines** which may have to be adapted to meet the contextual needs of each LPA candidate and congregation.*

*The following has been gleaned from various sources, especially from the experiences of mentors and candidates who have completed this process and shared their experiences and expertise.*

### **Expectations for Mentor Pastors**

Mentoring Pastors are a key partner in the continued training of LPAs. Mentor Pastors are local, ordained ministers who, in conjunction with the Bishop's office, provide for the ongoing supervision and accountability of Montana Synod LPAs.

A Mentor Pastor is expected (*as are all rostered leaders*) to always uphold the standards outlined in their letter of call and in the ELCA documented definitions and guidelines for discipline. A Mentor Pastor who violates these standards and practices may be terminated by the Bishop in his/her role as a mentor and be subjected to further discipline according to the practices of the ELCA.

If a Pastor Mentor is unable to fulfill his/her role as mentor, he/she is to alert the Synod office as soon as possible to allow time to find a new Mentor Pastor.

### **General Guidelines for Mentor Pastors**

Regular (at least monthly) meetings with the LPA student. This is the opportunity to address questions that come up in the everyday context of serving a congregation, i.e.:

- worship planning for regular Sunday services and special services (including funerals)
- sermon preparation and resources
- theological questions
- ministry of sacrament questions
- working with the Church council
- visitation and care of souls
- challenges in congregational life
- personal spiritual practices
- personal boundaries with others

Sharing resources. The Mentor Pastor can be tremendously helpful by sharing resources from his or her own library or their Church's library and other resources.

Worship planning meetings, classes, etc. Invite the LPA student to attend various meetings and classes at the Mentor's Church in order to learn and get exposure to various ideas and ways of teaching, planning, carrying out the work of the Church.

Introducing the LPA to clergy in the area. Facilitating the establishment of relationships with area-wide clergy helps give LPAs a network of support and an opening to work together with other congregations in ministering to the community.

Inviting and encouraging the LPA to participate in clergy activities. This would include cluster meetings, classes and workshops offered by NRIT, other workshops and trainings and retreats, installations and ordinations, pastor's retreats, etc. The introduction of ordained clergy to the LPA is helpful because many are not familiar with the LPA program yet.

## Detailed Guidelines for Mentor Pastors

Mentor Pastors will provide for learning in four specific areas during the LPA training course (*The Synod office will provide progress forms to document this training*):

1. Planning and Leading Bible Study
2. Preparation for Preaching
3. Visitation/Prayer and Care Of The Souls
4. Teaching the Catechism

Ways in which Mentor Pastors might integrate these four foci into their congregation's week-in week-out activity include:

1. Over the LPA student's two years be deliberate about asking them to lead in these areas:
  - Going away on vacation? Ask them to preach then get permission from the Bishop.
  - Need some variety in your Sunday morning Adult Education program? Ask them to lead six-week Bible Study either by developing their own study or by using one already made.
  - When doing hospital and nursing home visits invite the student to go along with you for a few times, and then turn them loose to do a few visits on their own.
  - What about teaching the confirmation?
  - Don't forget to offer feedback. The student will be eager to hear how they did and what you think.
  - This kind of support is crucial for their encouragement, confidence, and identity-development as a ministry leader.
2. Other Suggestions
  - It is important and helpful to have regular meetings to discuss how the program is going for the student.
  - You will want to meet at least once every month. A one-hour meeting ought to suffice.
  - This is a time for feedback, constructive criticism, and encouragement in regard to the areas of the learning mentioned above.
  - Just as important, this can be a time to check-in on how the process is going. Taking on leadership roles in the congregational setting can be a dynamic process. The student may have doubts about their ability.
  - They may not be sure about how to handle a particular situation that comes along with the tasks an LPA is certified to carry-out. So, this regular time of checking-in will be helpful to get a read on how the student is handling the process both inwardly and outwardly.
3. Discuss how the learning is going.
  - Many students will be coming into contact with new forms of biblical criticism. And most of this learning is done through video tapes so there is no opportunity to ask the professor questions.
  - You will be needed to answer questions, help make sense of the various forms of criticism, help the student understand the purpose of reading the Bible in these various ways, and to encourage them to keep an open mind about what they are being taught.
  - Of course, this should be done in a "mentoring sort of way." That is, it is important for you to respect the integrity of the student's growth and learning process.
  - You will want them to see the texts and other resources they are using to familiarize yourself with their coursework.

Most importantly, just try things. The mentor/student relationship can develop in a variety of ways. The only way it shouldn't develop is as no relationship at all. Other than that: do whatever works to nurture the growth and experience of the student.

## **Requirements for a Certificate of Completion**

Students of the LPA training program who have satisfied all requirements will receive a certificate of completion at program's end. Those students will have:

- Attended all class sessions. If it is necessary that a student miss a session an acceptable replacement may be negotiated with the Synod office or, participate in the missed class with the next LPA class.
- Completed all assignments as required, both written and tasked in the home study/mentor portions.
- Initiated regular meetings with their Mentor Pastor. Students are expected to meet with their mentor pastor prior to each retreat class to discuss resource materials and study preparations, and subsequent to each retreat class to reflect on the students' learning experience.
- Completed quarterly evaluations as requested for each home-study and mentor-guided training.

## **Requirements for Continued Leadership as an LPA**

Once all the requirements have been met and an individual has been recognized as an LPA in the Montana Synod, to remain active as an LPA the following annual requirements must be met:

1. 20 hours of Continuing education each year
2. Annual Report to the Bishop. (Sent by the Synod in December)
3. A typed manuscript of a preached sermon may be requested.
4. Remain in Good standing in an ELCA congregation.

"Authorization to provide ministry within the synod may be revoked at any time by the synodical Bishop, who need not specify the reason" ("Guidelines Related to Synodically Authorized or Licensed Ministries" of the ELCA--CC95.04.47t) ([Appendix A](#)).

## **Code of Practice for LPAs**

### **Permission for Worship Leadership**

Leading worship in an ELCA congregation does not, by itself, require an authorization by the Bishop. However, if an LPA is to preach or preside over Communion, they would need to be authorized each instance.

An Authorized Lay Worship Leader may preside at the Eucharist provided they receive the permission of the Bishop for each specific occasion ([Appendix D](#)). A request for permission to preside may be made in one of the following ways:

- A pastor, or congregational president if no pastor is available, may contact an LPA to ask that person to lead worship, preach, and preside at their congregation on a particular date. The requesting individual then emails the office of the Bishop for a Lay License for the person to preside at the Eucharist at a specified place and time.
- The Bishop may give written permission for an LPA in special situations to lead worship, preach, and preside at a particular congregation for an extended period of time. Again, a request is emailed to the Synod office and once approved by the Bishop, a Lay License, indicating their assignment, is sent from the office of the Bishop to the LPA and is copied to the requesting individual or congregation to be served.

The congregational bulletin should list that the LPA is there with a license from the Bishop.

### **Congregational Settings**

LPAs are not authorized to serve in congregations outside of the Montana Synod of the ELCA. If asked to serve in a congregation of another denomination or synod, LPAs may only respond as individuals at their own discretion but are not authorized by the Bishop of the Montana Synod to do so. LPA's are discouraged from preaching at congregations that have splintered off the ELCA.

LPAs may lead worship in union congregations with the permission of the office of the Bishop under the supervision of the Lutheran pastor of the union congregation. When a union congregation is served by a non-Lutheran pastor, special arrangements are made through the office of the Bishop.

LPAs are not authorized to participate in worship leadership in local ecumenical services except under the permission and supervision of their home pastor.

### **Expectations for LPAs**

All LPA's shall:

- Represent the Lord and his Church, the ELCA, and the Montana Synod with the grace, dignity, respect, and responsibility required of their position.
- Report any difficulties and/or irregularities to the office of the Bishop within 48 hours of their designated visit to a congregation.
- Use only this title (LPA) to identify themselves in person or in print. They shall never use the title Reverend, Pastor, Deacon, etc., in person or in print.
- Never wear a clerical collar or other attire which specifically identifies those individuals called to and ordained for the Office of Word and Sacrament.
- Follow the normal worship practices of the congregations in which they are serving.
- Be diligent in preparing to lead worship.
- Carry written authorization from the Bishop when presiding at the Eucharist.
- Be entitled to compensation for their services at the supply rate set by the Montana Synod, including reimbursement for mileage at the current IRS reimbursement rate.
- Wear a white alb when leading worship, and a cincture and/or cross, if desired. Stoles of any kind and chasubles are inappropriate and shall not be worn. Street clothes are also fine where appropriate.

- Normally NOT baptize someone during a regular service of worship or in private except under the provisions of the Church for emergency baptisms. (Any Christian may baptize in an emergency situation and report such a baptism to the pastor of the congregation.)
- NOT officiate at a wedding, since they are not authorized to do so by the Synod or ELCA.
- Conduct funerals in the absence of a pastor and with proper authorization from the congregational council and Bishop.
- Have a written statement of authorization by the Bishop included in the worship bulletin of congregations in which LPAs are preaching or presiding at the Eucharist.

### **Continuing Education for LPAs**

LPAs need opportunities for continued growth in competence and understanding as they utilize their gifts in ministry. Continuing education is how leaders enhance ministry abilities, acquire new skills, and experience personal growth for more effective ministry. It is the expectation of the Montana Synod that each LPA participate in at least 20 hours of continuing education experience annually. Such experiences may include formal classes or workshops, independent study, participation in pericope study groups, and the like. The continuing education experience shall be included in their annual report to the Bishop.

### **Discipline**

LPAs hold a unique and important public position and responsibility in the Montana Synod and the Church at large. This position should never be taken lightly. Failure to function appropriately as an LPA shall result in immediate discipline through the office of the Bishop and may include termination of authorization and removal from the role of LPA of this synod. Questionable or inappropriate behavior on the part of an LPA shall be reported to the office of the Bishop immediately.

All LPAs in the Montana Synod agree to live by the standards expressed in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* ([Appendix E](#)).

# Appendix A: ELCA Guidelines for Synodically Authorized or Licensed Ministries

## (CC95.04.47t)

These guidelines relate to bylaw 7.61.01. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* that addresses the issue of providing Word and Sacrament ministry through the use of synodically authorized ministry, where it is not possible to provide appropriate ordained pastoral leadership. Those who are authorized for such ministry within a synod are not rostered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (unless already serving on a roster of this Church) but are authorized to provide a specific ministry within a particular setting for a designated period of time.

Principle 40 and related sections in “The Use of the Means of Grace—A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament,” which was adopted “for guidance and practice” by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, also addresses this issue.

- A. **Identification of Need:** The synod identifies a congregation or other ministry where ordained pastoral leadership is not available for an extended period of time and where synodically authorized ministry may be appropriate. Because of the relationship of an authorized lay ministry to those serving in the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament, pastors serving congregations within the area where this ministry need is located normally will be consulted in this determination.
- B. **Invitation to Service:** An individual who demonstrates the potential for service is invited by the synod to enter a program of preparation. An individual who has been removed from rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by reason of misconduct or has been denied continuance in candidacy by reason of misconduct is precluded from serving in a synodically authorized ministry of this Church.
- C. **Qualifications:** A person invited to prepare for a synodically authorized ministry should be an active member of an ELCA congregation for at least one year. Prior to preparing to serve in synodically authorized ministry an individual must have:
  1. Been recommended by the individual’s pastor and congregation council;
  2. Consulted with synodical staff and/or the synodical committee responsible for the synod’s program of preparation; and
  3. Demonstrated the ability and willingness to participate in a program of preparation leading to possible service in a synodically authorized ministry.In making its determination concerning an individual’s eligibility to serve in a synodically authorized ministry, the synod will interview the applicant and will obtain written responses to the “Entrance Information Questions” in the “Candidacy Manual.” The synod will also obtain a background check, as outlined in the “Candidacy Manual,” on each individual being considered for authorization in the synod.
- D. **Synodical Committee for Authorized Ministry:** An appropriate synodical board or committee may be appointed by the Synod Council to provide the synodical Bishop with recommendations concerning the authorization of and accountability for authorized ministries within the synod. This committee may be a sub-committee of the synodical Candidacy Committee. When it is a separate committee, it should be closely related to the synod Candidacy Committee. In either case, the work of the two is distinct. The synodical committee or synod staff determines the educational program within the synod for persons considered for service in an authorized ministry; determines the eligibility for individuals to enter this program of preparation; and advises the Bishop on the suitability of an individual for service in a synodically authorized ministry.
- E. **Program of Preparation:** The synod defines the program of preparation for an authorized ministry of Word and Sacrament, consistent with guidelines developed by the Division for Ministry, and in consultation with an ELCA seminary. Such programs shall prepare persons to have knowledge and abilities in the following areas:
  1. Bible;
  2. Lutheran theology, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Confession of Faith and polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
  3. Worship;
  4. Spiritual discernment and faith development;
  5. Leadership expectations and identity;
  6. Contextual understanding; and
  7. Pastoral skills including preaching, catechetics, worship leadership, visitation, pastoral care, and outreach.

The program of preparation can be accomplished in a variety of ways including educational programs that utilize current rostered leaders within the synod, ELCA seminaries and continuing education centers, the ELCA *SELECT* curriculum, and other appropriate resources.

The synod determines when an individual is prepared for service within the synod. There is no guarantee of service within the synod and participation in a program of preparation does not mean that authorization for service will follow.

- F. **Authorization for Service:** When the synod has determined that a specific need exists, and with the consent of the congregation to be served, an individual may be authorized for service within the synod by the synodical Bishop, in consultation with the Synod Council. Such service shall fulfill assigned responsibilities, and authorization shall be for a specific period of time not to exceed one year, unless terminated earlier. Persons who serve in synodically authorized ministry are to meet the following criteria:
1. evidence of mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ;
  2. satisfactory participation in the synodical program of preparation, including demonstration of appropriate ministry skills;
  3. knowledge and acceptance of the Confession of Faith of this Church; and
  4. willingness to meet this Church's expectations concerning the personal conduct and behavior of persons serving in public ministry as described in "Vision and Expectations – Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."
- A person authorized by the synodical Bishop is then installed in such service.
- G. **Supervision and Accountability:** Accountability for synodically authorized ministry in a congregational setting is the direct responsibility of the Congregation Council. Accountability for a synodically authorized ministry in a non-congregational setting within a synod is the direct responsibility of the governing body of the entity that conducts that ministry, or if there is no such entity, the Synod Council. In all cases, a synodically authorized minister is to be under the direct supervision of an ordained minister appointed by the synodical Bishop. The supervising ordained minister shall report to the governing body and seek the advice and counsel of the synodical Bishop or appropriate synodical staff person in relationship to the synodically authorized minister.
- H. **Renewal and Revocation:** Renewal of authorization after one year may be given when a demonstrated need exists for its continuation. This need is determined by the synodical Bishop at the request and with the consent of the congregation or other ministry within the synod being served, consultation with the supervising ordained minister, and a review of both the ministry setting and the service of the authorized minister. Authorization to provide ministry within the synod may be revoked at any time by the synodical Bishop, who need not specify the reason.
- I. **Letter of Authorization:** The authorization may be evidenced by an appropriate letter describing the terms and conditions of the authorization or license. The description also may limit activities authorized to be conducted.
- J. **Marriage Services.** Where permitted by law, synodically authorized ministers may officiate at marriage services for members of the congregation in which they are authorized to serve, with the concurrence of the congregation and the approval of the synodical Bishop.
- K. **Other Matters:** Persons may serve in a synodically authorized ministry only within the synod that has authorized that ministry. A synod may consider for authorization an individual trained and authorized by another synod, based on the individual's qualifications and ability to meet the new synod's criteria for authorized ministry. Persons authorized for such ministries are not to wear clerical stoles, and should not wear clerical collars unless authorized by the synodical Bishop. The title "Pastor" is reserved for ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament and is not to be used by synodically authorized ministers. Synodically authorized ministers are not to offer therapy or counseling as a part of their ministries but may provide appropriate pastoral care.

*Adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
April 1995 [CC95.04.47t] and amended April 2005, and April 2006*

## Appendix B: LPA Candidate Information

### LPA Candidate Information

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE

#### Personal Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last* *First* *M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address* *Apartment/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *ZIP Code*

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional Information

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Emergency Contact Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last* *First*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address* *Apartment/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *ZIP Code*

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Relevant Info (food allergies, special needs for training sessions, etc.)** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Instructions for Background Checks

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS MONTANA SYNOD

To be rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to be in a position of public trust. The church expects those who serve as ordained pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, associates in ministry and LPAs to be exemplary in terms of their personal and professional conduct. Out of care of the church and its members, then, the ELCA's Unit for Vocation and Education – as of 2005 – now requires its synods to conduct a background check on all persons pursuing candidacy.

The Montana Synod, along with a number of other synods, has a contract with the Oxford Document Management Company, a Minnesota corporation, to conduct background checks on our ministry candidates. The process, done electronically on your computer by accessing Oxford's website is simple and straightforward. Once you have supplied them with the needed information (name, date of birth, Social Security number, driver's license number, and places of residence for the past seven years), you then electronically sign an authorization and release which permits Oxford to proceed with the background check. The check includes searches of motor vehicle records, as well as of county court records and a federal offender database. When completed, Oxford reports its findings back to the synod for its confidential use.

#### Six Easy Steps to Follow

- 1) On your computer, access Oxford Document's website: [www.oxforddoc.com](http://www.oxforddoc.com)
- 2) On their home page, click on "**Candidate Registration**" button at the top of the page.
- 3) The next screen to provide a "Client Number" and a "Position Code." These codes will be given to you by the Admin from the Synod office.
- 4) The next screen will verify that you have typed in the correct client number. It should say that the background check is being conducted for The Montana Synod of the ELCA.
- 5) Proceed to the next screen and type in the information requested. Note: on the request for addresses for the past seven years, be sure to include the name of each county where you resided. (Candidates who have been away at college within the past seven years will need to provide their college addresses as well, even though their home addresses may have been somewhere else.)
- 6) When you have completed filling in the information requested, proceed to the **authorization** statement and—after reading the terms of the authorization and release—click on "**Continue**" and follow any remaining instructions.

Should you encounter any problems in using Oxford Document's website, please feel free to call Candi Standall in the synod office at 406-453-1461 or [cstandall@montanasynod.org](mailto:cstandall@montanasynod.org)

The Synod will cover the first \$25.00 of the background check, with the remaining portion paid by either the candidate, or the candidate's congregation (to be determined when the candidate obtains the council's letter of recommendation to begin the LPA training program). The average background check will cost between \$50.00 - \$70.00 (approx.), but it does vary. The final bill (minus the first \$25) will be sent to the candidate and/or the congregation upon receipt by the Synod office. Ultimately, it is up to the LPA candidate to make sure the balance due is paid. This fee is NOT included in the LPA tuition charges.

## Appendix D: Sample Lay License



**Montana Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*  
*Montana Synod*

### Lay License to Perform Ministerial Acts

I hereby certify that Rick Brown is licensed to provide ministerial service (except for the celebration of marriages) in the following congregation(s):

CONGREGATION

Faith Lutheran Church

CITY AND STATE

Hamilton, MT

For: August 16, 2020

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurie Jungling  
Bishop of the Montana Synod  
9/15/2021

**The following notice should appear in the Church bulletin any time someone other than a pastor presides:**

"Name, a LPA, has been authorized by the Bishop of the Montana Synod to provide pastoral services in this congregation this Sunday."

1221 24<sup>th</sup> St S • Great Falls, MT 59405 • 406-453-1461 • [www.montanasynd.org](http://www.montanasynd.org)

**DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES  
FOR DISCIPLINE**

**ROSTERED MINISTERS,  
CONGREGATIONS, AND  
MEMBERS OF CONGREGATIONS**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Originally approved November 19, 1989, and subsequently approved December 5, 1993, on April 10, 2010, on November 10, 2014, on March 8, 2020, and on April 17, 2021 by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, pursuant to ELCA constitutional provision 20.21.

Published April 2021

Citations from the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* are based on the 2019 edition of that document.

## DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

### Grounding Values

Rooted in God's grace and steadfast love, we are called as followers of Jesus to live a life "of bold trust in God and joyful, generous service to everyone we know and meet in daily life."<sup>1</sup> Affirming God's gracious covenant made with us in baptism, we commit to live in right relationship with God and our neighbors.

When the gift of relationship with God and our neighbors is violated or used inappropriately, there is a need for accountability and just action. It is in this context that we, as a church body, establish guidelines for our conduct, actions, and ways in which we communicate with one another. These guidelines are necessary as we "continue in the covenant God made with us"<sup>2</sup> in our baptism to ensure that all people, and the church in particular, are protected from harmful or inappropriate actions, speech, communications, or other misconduct. As church, we must abide in a context that holds ourselves, and one another, to account for the sake and care of the whole church.

The following definitions and guidelines for discipline are set forth with the understanding that, following misconduct, the desired outcome is restoration of right relationships with God and with one another. This church embraces disciplinary processes which may include elements of counseling, admonition, and correction with the objective of healing and reconciliation. This church also acknowledges certain circumstances where reconciliation and restoration to the community may not be possible or may cause further harm. Particularly egregious conduct may result in suspension or removal from the roster or from membership.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://elca.org/Faith>

<sup>2</sup> In the rite of Affirmation of Baptism (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 236), the presiding minister asks:

"You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,  
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?"

## **Grounding Context**

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* (CBCR) outlines the grounds for discipline, the discipline that may be imposed, and who may bring charges:

- for ministers of Word and Sacrament at 20.22.01. through 20.22.03.;
- for ministers of Word and Service at 20.23.01. through 20.23.03.;
- for congregations at 20.31.01. through 20.31.03.; and
- for members of congregations at 20.41.01. and 20.41.02.

The constitution also outlines the processes for discipline. The disciplinary process for ministers of Word and Sacrament is set forth at 20.22.04. through 20.22.24. These same processes also apply to ministers of Word and Service by operation of 20.23.04. and 20.23.05. and to congregations by operation of 20.31.04. and 20.31.05. The detailed operations of these processes are set forth in the rules governing disciplinary proceedings, a separate document also created by the Committee on Appeals and approved by the Church Council (20.22.14.). The disciplinary process for members of congregations is set forth in 20.41.03. through 20.41.11. and also in \*C15.01. through \*C15.07. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

The CBCR assigns primary responsibility for the discipline process to synods (20.11.). Accordingly, it provides synod bishops with substantial discretion in the investigation of misconduct (20.22.04. through 20.22.06.).

Provision 20.21. of this church's constitution specifically calls for the Committee on Appeals "to establish **definitions and guidelines**, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of **the grounds for discipline** of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations." The purpose of this document is to elaborate on the grounds for discipline and to guide rostered ministers, congregations, and members in our lives together. Additionally, it is intended to help bishops, synod staff, hearing officers, discipline committee members, and consultation committee members in their work and to clarify what conduct is not acceptable in this church.

This document is written in accordance with the decisions of churchwide assemblies. It is grounded in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources, which help to shape this church's social teachings. No language in this document may be construed to contradict or override a current authorized social teaching of this church.

## DEFINITIONS

Unless the context indicates otherwise, for the purpose of this document:

1. "Adultery" means voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse.
2. "Constitution" means the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
3. "Church" or "this church" means the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
4. "Family" means not only persons related by genetics or marriage<sup>3</sup> but may also include "a variety of forms, more akin to the older term of 'household,' exclusively employed by Luther to include immediate family members, relatives, and others."<sup>4</sup>
5. "Harass" means to persistently annoy another or to create an unpleasant or hostile situation by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. Mere criticism or disagreement is not harassment.<sup>5</sup>
6. "Hate speech" means the expression of animosity or disparagement of an individual or group on account of a group characteristic such as race, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, language, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or immigration status.
7. "Infidelity" means the act or fact of having a romantic or sexual relationship with someone other than one's spouse or partner.
8. "Intellectual property" means property that derives from the work of the mind or intellect and can be registered and protected under state or federal copyright, trademark, or patent laws.
9. "Libel" means a written defamatory statement or representation that conveys an unjustly unfavorable impression.
10. "Plagiarism" means wrongly representing the works of others as one's own, in oral or written form.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2009, the ELCA adopted "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" as a social statement of this church. In its section on marriage (pages 15–21), "Gift and Trust" described a range of views existing within this church. Included among these views was both a recognition of an understanding of marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman and a commitment to the support of couples in lifelong, monogamous, same-gendered relationships. In the intervening decade, the action of the United States Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), guaranteed access to legal marriage to LGBTQIA+ couples in all fifty states.

<sup>4</sup> See "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," p. 21. See also pp. 15ff. and 25ff.

<sup>5</sup> See the social message, "Gender-Based Violence."

11. "Retaliation" or "retaliatory action" means the discharge, suspension, demotion, or other punitive action taken against an individual. Appropriately defending oneself against false accusations is not considered retaliation.
12. "Rostered minister" includes ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, and, in this context, candidates for rostered ministry.<sup>6</sup>
13. "Slander" means a false and defamatory oral statement about a person.
14. "Serious crime" means a crime that could be punishable by imprisonment for more than six months.
15. "Sexual abuse" means rape; sexual assault; sexual harassment; sexual relations with a minor child or a person otherwise not capable of consent; sexual relations resulting from threats, intimidation, coercion, blackmail, extortion, or manipulation; and sexual relations (outside of marriage) between a rostered minister and a person with whom the rostered minister has a pastoral or supervisory relationship, including, but not limited to, an employee, volunteer, student, or counselee, or a person in the congregation or other ministry served by the rostered minister.

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<sup>6</sup> See paragraph 3, "Report of Actions of the Church Council (March 6–8, 2020)." The Church Council voted to include the following language in the candidate statement on the Entrance Information form provided in the ELCA Candidacy Manual:

"As a candidate for rostered ministry in this church, I understand I will be held accountable to the synod's candidacy committee regarding this church's expectations for my speech and conduct as set forward in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. I understand that my candidacy for rostered ministry brings increased attention to my life. I am responsible for informing my bishop regarding any circumstance that might subject me to discipline according to *Definitions and Guidelines* were I a rostered minister. I understand that the candidacy committee may modify my candidacy status in response to my speech and conduct."

## GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF ROSTERED MINISTERS

The normative expectations of this church for its rostered ministers focus on faithful and effective exercise of ministerial leadership. In all matters of morality and personal ethics this church expects its rostered ministers to be exemplary in conduct.

**Grounds for discipline of rostered ministers are as follows:**

- A. Preaching or teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church** is grounds for discipline of rostered ministers. A summary of the faith confessed by this church is found in Chapter 2 of this church's constitution.
- B. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office** is grounds for discipline of rostered ministers. These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the character of the ministerial office and may be grounds for discipline.
  - 1. Confidentiality:** Ministers of Word and Sacrament must comply with 7.45.<sup>7</sup> of this church's constitution and not disclose information protected by that provision unless expressly permitted by that provision. All rostered ministers must respect and protect other confidential information and not disclose it absent good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, permission of those who shared the confidence, disclosure required by law, or disclosure necessary to prevent great harm.<sup>8</sup>
  - 2. Integrity:** Rostered ministers must be honest and forthright in their dealings with others. Dishonesty, deception, duplicity, or the manipulation of others for personal benefit or gain is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
  - 3. Professional attention to duties:** A rostered minister of this church has made commitments through ordination and through acceptance of a letter of call or appointment. Continued neglect of or indifference toward such commitments constitutes conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.

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<sup>7</sup> "In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has given confidential information to the minister of Word and Sacrament or who was observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament, or if the person intends great harm to self or others." (CBCR 7.45.)

<sup>8</sup> Communication in the nature of confession may be privileged by law. Other confidential information does not fall under this privilege. The question of which communications between a rostered minister and member are "privileged," such that their disclosure may not be compelled by law, varies from state to state. Questions regarding this issue should be directed to local legal counsel.

**4. Care of family:** For rostered ministers in a family, the following conduct is considered incompatible with the character of the ministerial office:

- a. Desertion or abandonment of a family member;
- b. Abuse of a family member; or
- c. Repeated failure to meet legally determined support obligations of a family member.

**5. Sexuality and public ministry:**<sup>9</sup> This church does not tolerate the abuse of the ministerial office for personal sexual gratification or exertion of authority over others. This church's understanding of human sexuality is stated in its authorized social teachings.

Rostered ministers who abuse the trust placed in them by engaging in infidelity, adultery, promiscuity, or sexual abuse of another are engaging in conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.<sup>10</sup>

**6. Addiction and substance misuse:**<sup>11</sup> Misuse of substances (such as alcohol or drugs) or compulsions (such as gambling or use of pornography) that impair the ministerial function of a rostered minister is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Continued high-risk behavior or refusal to comply with treatment also constitutes conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" and the social message, "Sexuality: Some Common Convictions."

<sup>10</sup> In 2009, this church expressly addressed the question of sexuality and public ministry in "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," which states (p. 35):

This church does not tolerate the abuse of the ministerial office for personal sexual gratification. This church holds high expectations for those individuals called to serve as rostered leaders. Pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who abuse the trust placed in them by engaging in promiscuity, infidelity, adultery, or forms of sexual abuse violate those high standards. Such violations severely damage the credibility of the public ministry to which this church and its leaders are called.

Provision B.5. is substantially based on this teaching of this church. This provision does not change the aspirational teaching of this church, set forth in its social statements, that all members of this church should abstain from sexual intercourse until married. See "A Social Statement on Abortion" (p. 4) and "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" (p. 31).

<sup>11</sup> See the social message, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation."

<sup>12</sup> Consistent with the value of restoration of right relationships, the approach of this church to such misuse may be referral for and insistence on evaluation, and the church may counsel inpatient or outpatient treatment should addiction be identified. Refusal to explore the possibility of misuse may result in referral to behavioral health resources with the expectation that they will be used and recovery maintained. Public ministry may not be appropriate until health and wellness are restored.

**7. Fiscal responsibilities:**<sup>13</sup> The following fiscal misconduct is considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office:

- a. Indifference to or avoidance of legitimate and neglected personal debts;
- b. Embezzlement of money or improper appropriation of the property of others;
- c. Using the ministerial office improperly for personal benefit or financial gain;
- d. Soliciting members or others to directly or indirectly acquire gifts, bequests, or similar benefits for personal gain.

**8. Membership in certain organizations:** This church has specifically declared in 7.31.11,<sup>14</sup> and 7.61.05,<sup>15</sup> that discipline may be administered to any of its rostered ministers who belong to any organization other than the Church which claims to possess in its teaching and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church.

Conduct considered incompatible with the character of the ministerial office includes membership in, or taking actions in concert with, organizations that encourage or promote hatred or bigotry on the basis of race, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, language, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or immigration status.

**9. Commission of a serious crime:**<sup>16</sup> A rostered minister who commits a serious crime is subject to discipline for engaging in conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. If the violation of law is purposefully and exclusively done as a principled act of civil disobedience to protest or to test a law which is reasonably perceived as unjust or contrary to Christian beliefs, it may not be grounds for discipline. Rostered ministers charged with a crime shall promptly notify the bishop's office in their synod of roster.

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<sup>13</sup> See "A Social Statement on: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All."

<sup>14</sup> "No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization. (CBCR 7.31.11.)

<sup>15</sup> "No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization. (CBCR 7.61.05.)

<sup>16</sup> See "A Social Statement on: The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries," Section 2D.

- 10. Hateful speech or actions:**<sup>17</sup> A rostered minister's use of harassing, abusive, discriminatory, libelous, slanderous or hateful speech or actions, at any time, whether in person or on any form of social media, is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
- 11. Abusive activity:** A rostered minister's physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual abuse of staff, colleagues, congregation members, or others is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Such abuse could include, but is not limited to, bullying or harassment in written or verbal form, either in person or by remote communication.
- 12. Intellectual property:** Rostered ministers will remain committed to protecting and honoring all intellectual property. Rostered ministers must also work to ensure that they do not misuse the intellectual property of others without appropriate permission and/or citation. Plagiarism is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
- 13. Retaliatory action:** A rostered minister may not take retaliatory action toward anyone who submits a complaint against the rostered minister to the leadership of a congregation; to the dean of a conference; to a synod bishop, synod council member, or synod staff member; to the presiding bishop or churchwide staff; or to any other person who holds the capacity to receive a complaint. Such retaliatory actions constitute conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
- 14. Relationship with prior congregation(s) or ministry:** Rostered ministers who have resigned or retired from or otherwise no longer officially serve a congregation or other ministry shall honor the integrity of the congregation or ministry. They shall respect and honor the current rostered minister(s) and mission of the congregation or ministry they no longer are called to serve.<sup>18</sup> They shall decline invitations from members to perform pastoral acts and refrain from asking members to directly or indirectly seek permission to perform such acts from the currently serving rostered minister. They shall not participate or interfere, whether personally or through a proxy, in the life of the congregation or ministry in any way, unless invited to participate by the current rostered minister(s) in conjunction with the congregation council or governing board. Such interference constitutes conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office or retirement status.

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<sup>17</sup> See "A Social Statement on: Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture," "A Social Statement on: Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action," and the social policy resolution, "Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric."

<sup>18</sup> "Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council. (*Constitution for Synods*, †S14.19.)

**15. Adherence to covenantal relationships:** Rostered ministers who actively and affirmatively incite, initiate, or encourage a congregation to leave the ELCA are engaged in conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.<sup>19</sup> This does not apply to exploring a cooperative relationship with a full-communion partner congregation.

**C. Willful disregard or violation of the functions and standards established by this church for the rostered ministries of this church** is grounds for discipline. Such standards and responsibilities established by this church are found in Chapter 7 of this church's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*.

**D. Willful disregard of the constitutions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions of this church** is grounds for discipline of rostered ministers.

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<sup>19</sup> "Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ... Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation ... encourage adherence to covenantal relationships with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*." (CBCR 7.31.02.)

## GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF CONGREGATIONS

- A. **Departing from the faith confessed by this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church. A summary of the faith confessed by this church is found in Chapters 2 and 3 of this church's constitution.
- B. **Willful disregard or violation of any of the criteria for recognition as congregations of this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church. These criteria are set forth in 9.21. and 9.22. of this church's constitution.
- C. **Willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions of this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church.

## GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS OF CONGREGATIONS

**A. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith by a member of a congregation of this church** may be grounds for disciplinary action against the member. The behavior must be seen to bring harm to the faith of others and detract from the mission and ministry of the congregation. The Christian faith as confessed by this church is expressed in Chapter 2 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. A congregation member who persists in denial of this faith and seeks to convince others to do so may be subject to discipline. In order to warrant discipline, such behavior must be more than occasional expressions of doubt, private comments, or conduct contrary to the Christian faith.

**B. Willful and/or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming of a member of the Church** is grounds for disciplinary action against a congregation member. Commission of violent crimes including murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, rape, attempted rape, sex crimes, hate crimes, child abuse, intimate partner abuse, elder abuse, or any similar offense is seen as reprehensible to the Christian community and may warrant discipline. Persons who are found to have engaged or who are currently engaging in such actions remain in need of pastoral care and compassion.

A member's use of harassing, abusive, discriminatory, libelous, slanderous, or hateful speech or actions, at any time, whether in person or on any form of social media, may be grounds for discipline.

Conduct which includes membership in, or taking actions in concert with, organizations that encourage or promote hatred or bigotry on the basis of race, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, language, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or immigration status may be grounds for discipline.

**C. Continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation** is grounds for discipline of a member engaging in such behavior. A congregation member who repeatedly interrupts the congregation's gatherings, worship services, fellowship or educational activities, congregation or council meetings, or disparages the congregation or its ministry to others in ways that damage or destroy the ability of other members to carry out the church's mission may be disciplined by the church. In order to warrant discipline, such conduct must be more serious than a member merely expressing disagreement, being impolite, or even exhibiting anger. The member must have engaged in a course of conduct and communication so persistent, inappropriate, and objectionable that the congregation's ability to perform ministry is being impaired.

**D. Willful and repeated harassment, abuse, bullying, libel, or slander of member(s) of the congregation** are grounds for discipline of a member. If the treatment of another, including rostered ministers or staff, by a member of the congregation repeatedly devolves into slanderous, vicious, or intentionally hurtful communications,

no matter the means of such communications, the behavior is unacceptable and may warrant disciplinary action. Similarly, if any members, rostered ministers, or staff are being constantly harassed by another member for any reason, whether such harassment is based upon race, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, language, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or immigration status or any other reason, perceived or real, the behavior may warrant discipline without regard to the nature of the harassment. The use of phone, email, text messages, social media or other remote communication, and behaviors including anything from shouting and gestures to actual stalking, may all be means of unacceptable defamatory or harassing behavior between members.

## Appendix F: Further Options for Foundational Courses

*(Not included with tuition)*

### **Old Testament**

Select Learning DVD: Introduction to the Old Testament

**Text:** A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures. Michael D. Coogan, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006

**Presenters:** Dr. Ralph W. Klein, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Dr. Katheryn Schifferdecker, Luther Seminary.

This ten-lesson course introduces students to the high points of the Old Testament. Each session contains four 20 minute segments:

- The Primeval History in Genesis 1-11
- The stories of Sarah and Abraham
- Exodus-Deuteronomy
- The Deuteronomistic History (Joshua-Kings)
- Amos and Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Isaiah 40-55
- Job
- Psalms

**Cost:** \$179.00 + Textbook

**Background:** Select is a program of continuing theological education intended specifically for clergy, Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers, Associates in Ministry and for laity. Select is a program of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), working in cooperation with Lutheran seminaries. However, most of the courses offered are appropriate for use by persons of all denominations.

**Notes:** This option is the most “Lutheran” perspective on the Old Testament. The course is supported by an up-to-date textbook and a study guide, including web resources.

## Old Testament

Great Courses: Old Testament DVD/Audio CD/digital download

**Presenter:** Dr. Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, and Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and the College of Arts and Sciences. She is also Affiliated Professor at the Woolf Institute, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

**Text:** Course Guidebook (152-page course synopsis), Portraits & illustrations, Suggested readings

### **24 lectures/ 30 minutes each**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 In the Beginning                  | 13 The Book of Judges, Part I                  |
| 2 Adam and Eve                      | 14 The Book of Judges, Part II                 |
| 3 Murder, Flood, Dispersion         | 15 Samuel and Saul                             |
| 4 Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar         | 16 King David                                  |
| 5 Isaac                             | 17 From King Solomon to Pre-classical Prophecy |
| 6 The Jacob Saga                    | 18 The Prophets and the Fall of the North      |
| 7 Folklore Analysis and Type Scenes | 19 The Southern Kingdom                        |
| 8 Moses and Exodus                  | 20 Babylonian Exile                            |
| 9 The God of Israel                 | 21 Restoration and Theocracy                   |
| 10 Covenant and Law, Part I         | 22 Wisdom Literature                           |
| 11 Covenant and Law, Part II        | 23 Life in the Diaspora                        |
| 12 The "Conquest"                   | 24 Apocalyptic Literature                      |

**Cost:** Price Varies depending on the options you choose (DVD, Audio download, CD) also, there are often sales that can give a significant discount.

**Notes:** This is an academic approach to the Old Testament.

**Details:** Find more information at [www.greatcourses.com](http://www.greatcourses.com).

## Old Testament

Yale Divinity School Open Online Streaming Course

**Presenter:** Christine Hayes is the Robert F. and Patricia Ross Weis Professor of Religious Studies at Yale. She received her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley in 1993. A specialist in Talmudic Midrashic studies, Hayes offers courses on the literature and history of the biblical and Talmudic periods.

**About the Course:** This course examines the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) as an expression of the religious life and thought of ancient Israel, and a foundational document of Western civilization. A wide range of methodologies, including source criticism and the historical-critical school, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, and literary and canonical approaches are applied

to the study and interpretation of the Bible. Special emphasis is placed on the Bible against the backdrop of its historical and cultural setting in the Ancient Near East.

**Text:** Introduction to the Bible. Dr. Christine Hayes, Yale University Press., 2012 \$25.00

- Lecture 1 The Parts of the Whole
- Lecture 2 The Hebrew Bible in Its Ancient Near Eastern Setting
- Lecture 3 The Hebrew Bible in Its Ancient Near Eastern Setting: Genesis 1-4 in Context
- Lecture 4 Doublets and Contradictions, and the Historical-Critical Method
- Lecture 5 Critical Approaches to the Bible: Introduction to Genesis 12-50
- Lecture 6 Biblical Narrative: The Stories of the Patriarchs (Genesis 12-36)
- Lecture 7 Israel in Egypt: Moses and the Beginning of Yahwism (Genesis 37- Exodus 4)
- Lecture 8 Exodus: From Egypt to Sinai (Exodus 5-24, 32; Numbers)
- Lecture 9 The Priestly Legacy: Cult and Sacrifice, Purity and Holiness
- Lecture 10 Biblical Law: The Three Legal Corpora of JE P and D
- Lecture 11 On the Steps of Moab: Deuteronomy
- Lecture 12 The Deuteronomistic History: Life in the Land (Joshua and Judges)
- Lecture 13 The Deuteronomistic History: Prophets and Kings (1 and 2 Samuel)
- Lecture 14 The Deuteronomistic History: Response to Catastrophe (1 and 2 Kings)
- Lecture 15 Hebrew Prophecy: The Non-Literary Prophets
- Lecture 16 Literary Prophecy: Amos
- Lecture 17 Literary Prophecy: Hosea and Isaiah
- Lecture 18 Literary Prophecy: Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk
- Lecture 19 Literary Prophecy: Perspectives on the Exile (Jeremiah, Ezekiel and 2nd Isaiah)
- Lecture 20 Responses to Suffering and Evil: Lamentations and Wisdom Literature
- Lecture 21 Biblical Poetry: Psalms and Song of Songs
- Lecture 22 The Restoration: 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah
- Lecture 23 Visions of the End: Daniel and Apocalyptic Literature
- Lecture 24 Alternative Visions: Esther, Ruth, and Jonah

**Cost:** Free Web Streaming.

**Details:** This is an online free course by a Yale professor. You will need a computer and decent internet streaming capability to view these videos. The text you can purchase online.

**Website:** <http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies>

**Notes:** This is an academic approach to the Old Testament.

## **New Testament**

Select Learning DVD: Introduction to the New Testament

**Text:** The New Testament: An Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings, Bart D. Ehrman, 2004

**Presenters:** Dr. Ray Pickett, Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, Dr. Sarah Henrich, Lutheran Seminary, and Dr. Rick Carlson, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Each session contains four 20 minute segments.

**Sessions:**

1. Introduction, Dr. Ray Pickett, Dr. Sarah Henrich, and Dr. Rick Carlson
- 2 Gospel of Mark, Dr. Ray Pickett
3. Gospel of Matthew, Dr. Rick Carlson
4. Gospel of Luke, Dr. Sarah Henrich
5. Gospel of John, Dr. Ray Pickett
6. Acts, Dr. Sarah Henrich
7. Letters of Paul I, Dr. Ray Pickett
  - a. 1 & 2 Thessalonians
  - b. Galatians)
8. Letters of Paul II, Dr. Rick Carlson
  - a. 1 & 2 Corinthians
  - b. Romans
9. Letters of Paul III, Dr. Sarah Henrich,
  - a. Philippians & Philemon
  - b. Deutero-Pauline Epistles
  - c. Pastoral Epistles
10. Revelation, Dr. Rick Carlson

**Cost:** \$179 + Text

**Background:** In the course participants are introduced to key themes and issues in the New Testament and learn basic skills to equip them to be faithful, creative interpreters of New Testament texts. The Introduction to the New Testament DVD presents a model for interpreting Scripture that emphasizes the importance of reading New Testament texts in their cultural and literary contexts with a view to relating them to contemporary cultural and ministry contexts. The course will focus on the practice of interpreting New Testament texts. Students will use the models and insights from presentations on the Select DVD to explore questions raised by the study of specific New Testament texts and then discuss how these texts continue to shape our faith and practice in today's world.

**Notes:** This is a Lutheran resource

## **New Testament**

Great Courses: New Testament DVD/Audio CD

**Presenter:** Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He completed his undergraduate work at Wheaton College and earned his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

**Text:** Course Guidebook (168-page course synopsis), Portraits & illustrations, Suggested readings

**24 lectures/ 30 minutes each**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 The Early Christians and Their literature   | 17 Paul's Letter to the Romans      |
| 2 The Greco-Roman Context                     | 18 Paul, Jesus, and James           |
| 3 Ancient Judaism                             | 19 The Deutero-Pauline Epistles     |
| 4 The Earliest Traditions About Jesus         | 20 The Pastoral Epistles            |
| 5 Mark—Jesus the Suffering Son of God         | 21 Hebrews                          |
| 6 Matthew—Jesus the Jewish Messiah            | 22 First Peter suffering Christians |
| 7 Luke—Jesus the Savior of the World          | 23 The Book of Revelation           |
| 8 John—Jesus the Man from Heaven              | 24 Do We Have the Original          |
| 9 Noncanonical Gospels                        |                                     |
| 10 The Historical Jesus—Sources and Problems  |                                     |
| 11 The Historical Jesus—Solutions and Methods |                                     |
| 12 Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet              |                                     |
| 13 The Acts of the Apostles                   |                                     |
| 14 Paul and his Modus Operandi                |                                     |
| 15 Paul and the Crises of His Churches        |                                     |
| 16 Pauline Ethics                             |                                     |

**Cost:** Price Varies depending on the options you choose (DVD, Audio download, CD) also, there are often sales that can give a significant discount.

**Details:** Find more information at [www.greatcourses.com](http://www.greatcourses.com).

## **New Testament**

Yale Divinity School Open Online Streaming Course

**Presenter:** Dale B. Martin is the Woolsey Professor of Religious Studies at Yale. He was educated at Abilene Christian University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Yale University. His work explores the New Testament, Christian origins, the Greco-Roman world, the ancient family, and gender and sexuality in the ancient world.

**About the Course:** This course provides a historical study of the origins of Christianity by analyzing the literature of the earliest Christian movements in historical context, concentrating on the New Testament. Although theological themes will occupy much of our attention, the course does not attempt a theological appropriation of the New Testament as scripture.

Rather, the importance of the New Testament and other early Christian documents as ancient literature and as sources for historical study will be emphasized. A central organizing theme of the course will focus on the differences within early Christianity (-ies).

**Text:** Downloadable resources from Yale Open Courses

### **Sessions**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Introduction: Why Study the New Testament? | 15 Paul as Pastor   |
| 2 From Stories to Canon                      | 16 Paul as Jewish Theologian                                |
| 3 The Greco-Roman World                      | 17 Paul's Disciples   |
| 4 Judaism in the First Century               | 18 Arguing with Paul?                                       |
| 5 The New Testament as History               | 19 The "Household" Paul: The Pastorals                      |
| 6 The Gospel of Mark                         | 20 The "Anti-household" Paul: Thecla                        |
| 7 The Gospel of Matthew                      | 21 Interpreting Scripture: Hebrews                          |
| 8 The Gospel of Thomas                       | 22 Interpreting Scripture: Medieval interpretations         |
| 9 The Gospel of Luke                         | 23 Apocalyptic and Resistance                               |
| 10 The Acts of the Apostles                  | 24 Apocalyptic and Accommodation                            |
| 11 Johannine Christianity: The Gospel        | 25 Ecclesiastical Institutions: Unity, Martyrs, and Bishops |
| 12 Johannine Christianity: The Letters       | 26 The "Afterlife" of the New Testament                     |
| 13 The Historical Jesus                      |   |
| 14 Paul as Missionary<br>(Old Resource)      |   |

## **Lutheran Theology**

Getting Down to Basics: Augsburg Confessions and Small Catechism

**Textbook:** *Book of Concord*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, (2001)

**Presenter:** Timothy Wengert

**About the Course:** For Lutherans, *The Book of Concord* provides the definitive collection of their confessions of faith, including the all-important Augsburg Confession (1530) and Small and Large Catechisms (1529). This course provides an overview of the historical development of all the documents in *The Book of Concord*, as well as in-depth looks at their theology, focusing particularly on the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms. Here participants will discover not only the basic doctrinal commitments of the Lutheran Confessions but also how they may apply in contemporary parish settings. This course provides a lively, down-to-earth examination of such central Lutheran teachings as justification by grace through faith on account of Christ, the distinction between law and gospel, the theology of the cross, the Church and public ministry, the sacraments, and Christian callings in daily life. Here the students will gain new insight into the basics of Lutheran teaching and how it can strengthen their faith and witness today.

The students will:

1. Become thoroughly familiar with the Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism
2. Understand the historical and theological context out of which they speak
3. Discover new ways to apply these teaching to life in today's parish

Sessions:

1. Confessing Justification (Augsburg Confessions Articles II, IV, XX)
2. Law and Gospel; Theology of the Cross (III, V, XII)
3. God's Two Hands (XVI, XVIII)
4. Good Works and Christian vocation (VI, XVI, XX, XXVI)
5. The Sacraments (IX-XIII; XXII, XXIV)
6. Church and Ministry (V, VII, XIV-XV, XXVIII)
7. Other Confessional Documents
8. The Small Catechism: 10 Commandments and Creed
9. The Small Catechism: The Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and Confession
10. The Small Catechism: The Lord's Supper with Luther's Preface, The Household Chart of Bible Passages, and Liturgies for the Christian Household

**Cost:** \$179.95 + Text

**Details:** Find more information at <https://www.selectlearning.org/store/all/getting-down-basics>

# Appendix G: Montana Synod Guidelines for Licensing Worship

September 2020

WHO?	License?	For what?	How often?
Ordained Clergy, ELCA	No		
Ordained Clergy (or equivalent), Ecumenical Partners	No		
SAM (Synodically Authorized Ministers)	Yes	HC, Preaching, and long-term ministry	Once a Year (in January) – this is done by the Associate to the Bishop
LPA (single service pulpit supply)	Yes	HC, Preaching	For the single specific date only
LPA (weekly fill-in for limited time)	Yes	HC, Preaching	For a specific date-range or indicated dates
LPA in training	Yes, but given only in limited circumstances	HC, Preaching	For specific date only
Non-LPA lay person	Yes, though very rarely granted except in certain circumstances	HC, Preaching	Specific date-- the request must contain a description of the person, their relationship to the congregation and their qualifications
Intern	Yes	HC, Preaching	Upon start date for the whole year
Clergy Candidate for ministry (as supply preacher only)	Yes	HC (after internship), preaching anytime	For specific date

## How to request a license?

- Call or email Candi Standall at 406-453-1461 or [cstandall@montanasynod.org](mailto:cstandall@montanasynod.org) . She will pass your request along to the bishop.

## When to request a license?

- The best option is at least 10 days in advance if known, but as soon as possible before the worship service. For LPAs, in a last minute emergency, send an email request immediately and then lead the service with Holy Communion. For lay people, in an emergency, send an email request immediately and lead the service without Holy Communion.

## What to include in the license request?

- The name & role of the person requesting the license.
- The name and location of the congregation(s).
- The name of the person receiving the license.
- Their role: LPA, lay person, intern, or clergy candidate. (Please include contact info if the clergy candidate is not from the MT synod).
- Specific date(s) or date range of worship leadership. No general licenses will be granted.
- For preaching, Holy Communion or both.

## Who may request a license?

Current pastor, church secretary, council member, worship committee member. Only when none of the above are able or available to do so should the LPA make the request themselves.