



## Licensed Lay Ministry Report to the 2025 Synod Assembly

Grace & Peace to you from God our creator and Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord!

The Licensed Lay Academy provides an awesome opportunity for lay leaders who feel a call to pursue more intentional study and service to our church in SE Michigan. The gifts of Academy participants, current LLMS and our Academy instructors continue to be a great blessing for the program.

This ministry is guided by an Advisory Board: LLM Jane Alder, Pr. Matthew Bode, LLM Wayne Butts, LLM Dale Eckart/Administrator, Pr. Sara Freudenberg, and LLM Robin McCants/Director.

To remain licensed to serve as a minister in the Southeast Michigan Synod, annual interviews are required for each minister, which now occur in June. LLMS are also required to have regular mentor interactions, continued education and annual retreats. LLMS that serve as a pastoral presence in a congregation have additional requirements from the Bishop.

The year in review:

- One participant has completed an internship
- Two participants are preparing for internships
- One participant has completed an audit of the Academy courses
- Six new participants joined the Academy
- Celebrated the retirement of longtime instructor and one of the original program planners, Pastor Dennis Bux, who taught Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Ethics and Systematic Theology
- Recruited new instructors:
  - Rev. Scott Seeke – Teaching the Word
  - Rev. Beth Birkholz - Systematic Theology
  - Rev. Joel Brandt – Old Testament
  - Rev. Daryl Moore – Pastoral Care (and our only non-Lutheran instructor)
  - Rev. Elizabeth Friedman – joins Rev. Matthew Bode to lead Christian Worship this Spring
- Added two advanced classes:
  - Worship 2.0 taught by Rev. Jen Kiefer (spring 2025)
  - Preaching 2.0 taught by Bishop Don Kreiss (fall 2025)
- We have 29 LLMS on the 2024-2025 roster and celebrate them as they continue to seek God's direction in faith and service.
- Had an amazing fall retreat, "Loving & Caring for Self & Community". LLM Dave Corliss led a session on leveraging professional relationships in the congregation and locating critical data for use in grant proposals, etc. to tell the story of need, success and more. Pastor Kristin McCarthy led us in Boundaries & Self Care to prevent burnout and create space to breathe and be more effective in ministry.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Licensed Lay Academy is invited to reach out to myself or LLM Administrator Dale Eckart as the spirit moves you. You will be surprised at what you will learn from both our instructors and from classmates. We look forward to having you!

The remaining courses for 2025 are:

- Church History, September 13 - October 11 (Rev. Ken Grant, Genesis /Detroit)
- Annual Retreat - October 25
- Advanced Preaching - October 11, 18 + November 1, 8 (Bishop Don Kreiss)
- Lutheran Confessions - November 1 – December 6 (Rev. Matthew Bode, Zion/Ferndale)

**Respectfully submitted,**

Robin McCants, LLM, Director [r.mccants@semisynod.com](mailto:r.mccants@semisynod.com)

Dale Eckart, LLM, Administrator, [deckart1@gmail.com](mailto:deckart1@gmail.com)