

A
TRAINING
PROGRAM

FOR

COMMISSIONED
LAY PASTORS

2010 - 2011

Sponsored by
The Synod of Lincoln Trails
1100 West 42nd Street, #125
Indianapolis, IN 46208
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ORIGIN, BACKGROUND, and RATIONALE for the Training Program for Commissioned Lay Pastors

Commissioned Lay Pastor Training sponsored by the Synod of Lincoln Trails came into being in 2000, at the request, in 1999, of the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois. The program was discussed and planned by a gathering of folks from several of the synod's presbyteries.

The program is designed to:

1. Meet the subject requirements of the Book of Order for those seeking to be commissioned lay pastors;
2. Offer quality education through the use of excellent contemporary resources and teachers/leaders who are current, and practiced, in their knowledge areas;
3. Challenge persons to explore a wide-range of theological viewpoints and opinions - in reading assignments, class lectures, and class participation/discussion;
4. Encourage learning and growth in the vocational journey towards being a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
5. Contribute to the development of relationships among peers from across the two-state area that is the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

The program is based on a Reformed understanding that God desires growth and transformation for all of us and that we are to be life-long learners. It is expected that each cohort group will reflect the diversity within the Synod of Lincoln Trails: very small churches, very large churches, small towns, big cities, a wide range of theological perspectives, much experience preaching and teaching, little experience preaching and teaching. Diversity of opinion, perspective and experience enriches our learning and our growth. The program is designed to encourage learners to explore their sense of call – to discern where God wants and needs them to be. And it is designed to allow that exploration in the context of community – the bedrock of the Reformed tradition.

Who and What Is a Commissioned Lay Pastor?

A Commissioned Lay Pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (USA), who is granted a local commission by the **presbytery** to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. Areas of instruction shall include: Bible, Reformed Theology, Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching.

Why a Synod-Wide Training Program?

The Synod of Lincoln Trails, in consultation with several of its presbyteries, has agreed to coordinate a two-year training program for those wishing to be considered by their presbyteries as potential commissioned lay pastors.

Criteria for Enrollment in the SOLT Training Program

Anyone who enrolls in the Synod of Lincoln Trails Training Program must meet the following criteria: 1.) Membership in a PC(USA) congregation within the Synod; 2.) A mature Christian faith expressed in service to the particular church and to other governing bodies; 3.) Proven leadership and communication skills; 4.) **Endorsement of the Session of the applicant's congregation.** 5.) **An interview with, and endorsement from, the Executive Presbyter, Committee on Ministry or other appropriate body within the applicant's presbytery.** 6.) **Signature on, and commitment to, the program's Student Participation Covenant Statement.**

Schedule of Classes

All classes will take place at the Eastland Suites Hotel, I-74 and Cunningham Avenue, Urbana, Illinois. Classes will meet as follows:

January 8-10, 2010	January 14-16, 2011
March 5-7, 2010	March 4-6, 2011
May 7-9, 2010	May 6-8, 2011
July 9-11, 2010	July 8-10, 2011
September 24-26, 2010	September 16-18, 2011
November 5-7, 2010	November 11-13, 2011

Subjects will include: Vocational Assessment and Healthy Ministry, Reformed Theology and Church History, Old Testament, New Testament, Preaching (2 classes), Worship, Sacraments, Polity and Administration, Pastoral Care and Boundary Issues, Education and Spirituality, Contextual Ministry.

Each class will consist of 12 contact hours. Classes will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Friday evening and will conclude at Noon on Sunday. Assignments will be required both before and after each class session.

The **cost** for **each** weekend course is \$500 per student - or a total of \$6,000 for the entire training program. This includes room (double occupancy), 4 meals, leadership costs, and textbooks. **Congregations and presbyteries are encouraged to assist their participants with these costs.** The commuter rate is \$400 per student per class; those living more than 30 minutes from Urbana are urged NOT to commute. A limited number of single rooms are available at an additional cost of \$150 per weekend per person.

How Do Participants Register?

To register for the Synod of Lincoln Trails Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program:

1. Complete the attached application form.
2. Obtain the endorsement of your congregation's Session and submit the Session Endorsement Form.
3. Obtain the endorsement of your Executive Presbyter, Committee on Ministry or other appropriate entity of your presbytery and submit the Presbytery Endorsement Form.
4. Sign the Student Participation Covenant.
5. **Submit all application and endorsement forms to the appropriate Presbytery Contact Person. The presbytery is asked to mail all applications to the Synod office**

in one mailing! With each application, attach a check for \$500 (the cost of the first weekend course.) (*Checks payable to SOLT.*)

6. Mail to: The Rev. Carol McDonald, Synod of Lincoln Trails, 1100 West 42nd Street, #125, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Some Important Information

1. *Each participating presbytery has been given a quota/number of applications it may submit.*
2. *Completed Applications include the candidate's written statement, the endorsement of the Session, the endorsement of the Presbytery and signed covenant statements from both student and presbytery. Only completed applications will be accepted and they must be received in the Synod office no later than October 15, 2009.*
3. *Completed applications indicate a person's intention to enroll for the entire two-year program.*

**Completed Application Forms Due by October 15, 2009
with check for \$500 (payable to SOLT)
Mail to: Synod of Lincoln Trails
Attention: Carol McDonald
1100 West 42nd Street, #125
Indianapolis, IN 46208**

**Application for Commissioned Lay Pastor Training
2010 - 2011**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone () _____ Evening Phone() _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Name and Address of PC(USA) Church where you are a member: _____

How long have you been a member of a PC(USA) congregation? _____

Please provide a 1/2 page typewritten response to each of the following questions.

Please describe the highlights of your faith journey.

Please describe your experience as a leader in the church (congregation, presbytery, etc.)

Please describe your experience in the area of communication (preaching, teaching, working with groups, etc.)

What leads you to believe that God is calling you to prepare yourself to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor?

Your Signature _____ Date _____

**Commissioned Lay Pastor Training 2010-2011
Synod of Lincoln Trails**

Session Endorsement Form

On _____, 2009, the Session of the _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ met with _____ and talked with him/her about

1. His/her journey of faith that has led him/her to this point in life. . .
2. His/her experience of leadership in the life of both the congregation and the larger church. . .
3. His/her desire and ability to communicate the gospel message to groups and to individuals. . .
4. His/her sense of call to this particular ministry. . .

We hereby endorse _____ to participate in the 2010-2011 training program sponsored by the Synod of Lincoln Trails for those preparing to become Commissioned Lay Pastors.

Signature of Clerk of Session _____

Name of Church _____

Date _____

**Synod of Lincoln Trails
Commissioned Lay Pastor Training 2010-2011**

Presbytery Endorsement Form

Representatives of the Presbytery of _____ met with _____
_____ on _____, 2009, and talked with him/her about the following

subjects:

1. His/her Christian faith and the journey that has led him/her to this point in life.
2. His/her leadership experience in the church - both in the congregation and in the larger church.
3. His/her ability and desire to communicate the gospel message to both individuals and groups
4. His/her sense of call to the ministry of being a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
5. His/her fitness for this ministry.

The Presbytery of _____ hereby endorses _____
to participate in the 2010-2011 Commissioned Lay Pastor training program sponsored by the
Synod of Lincoln Trails.

Signature of Interviewer _____

Title _____

Date _____

**RULES OF COMMUNITY LIFE
COVENANT FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

**Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program
Synod of Lincoln Trails**

As a student/participant in the Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program of the Synod of Lincoln Trails, I promise to live by the following 'rules of community life:'

1. I will keep confidentiality.
2. I will not judge others.
3. I will value the opinions and ideas of my fellow students, even if I do not agree with something that is said.
4. I will respect each class member's journey/walk of faith.
5. I will respect the differences present among the members of the class (personality, viewpoints, some are quiet, some are more extraverted.)
6. I will support and encourage my fellow class members.
7. I will seek to be honest with myself and others – as thoughts and feelings and ideas are expressed.
8. I will work diligently not to take personally the comments of others.
9. I will participate in class in such a way that my love for God, Christ, and Spirit is visible.
10. I will participate in class in such a way that the gathered community is honored as part of the Body of Christ, the church.
11. I will honor the rules of community life and guidelines for class participation and will encourage accountability among my classmates to these rules and guidelines.

As a student participant in the Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program of the Synod of Lincoln Trails, I promise to participate in class sessions by:

1. Preparing as fully as possible for each class session – by doing the reading, preparing the written assignments, praying for class members and instructors.
2. Sitting with, and conversing with, different class members at each session in order to build relationships with all members of the group.
3. Taking responsibility for what I say and feel.
4. Using care-full listening skills.
5. Being sensitive to differences in communication styles – both among students and instructors.
6. Pondering what I hear and feel before I speak.

#3-6 are adapted from Respectful Communication Guidelines by Eric Law)

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2009

Signature of Student

**RULES OF COMMUNITY LIFE
COVENANT FOR PRESBYTERY PARTICIPATION**

**Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program
Synod of Lincoln Trails**

As a partner in a synod-wide endeavor to provide training for those seeking to become commissioned lay pastors in the presbyteries of the Synod of Lincoln Trails, the Presbytery of _____ will:

Engage in serious continuing dialogue/conversation with each applicant/student regarding

- a. Gifts and skills and fit for ministry.
- b. Ability to function in a leadership role.
- c. Ability to function, and contribute to, a group setting.
- d. Desire and ability to function in a learning environment where prior knowledge, beliefs and assumptions may be challenged.

Provide a presence for at least two class sessions during the two-year course of study.

Provide access to the appropriate entity of Presbytery throughout the process of application, study, and evaluation for commissioning – for the student’s guidance, nurture, and support.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2009

Signature and Title/Position

Signature and Title/Position

Signature and Title/Position

Presbytery of _____