

2012-2014 APPLICATION

for the Lay Worship Leader Program of the Lay Ministry Institute Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

Notes to Applicants:

Please read the *Lay Ministry Institute Handbook* before completing this application to become familiar with our programs. For a copy of the *Handbook*, see the synod website (www.uss-elca.org) or contact the synod office: 570-524-9778.

The following application form may be completed in either of two ways:
as a fillable PDF form (electronic) or by hand.

By hand, simply write or type on this hard copy of the application.

To use the PDF form, download the form from the synod website (www.uss-elca.org) using Adobe Reader or another program that reads PDF files. Open the form and type in open fields as indicated. *Note: you will be able to **print** your completed form, but will NOT (using Adobe Reader) be able to **save** the form electronically as completed. If you prefer to save an electronic version of your information, please cut and paste your data into your word processing program.*

Please send your completed application to:

The Lay Ministry Institute
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
P.O. Box 36
Lewisburg, PA 17837

LMI Lay Leaders Program Application Checklist

- Read Lay Ministry Institute Handbook See page 1
- Complete/submit Application Form Pages 4-7
- Complete/submit Release/Signature Page Page 8
- Complete/submit Autobiographical Essay Page 9
- Request Statement from the Applicant's Pastor Pages 10-12
- Request Statement from the Applicant's
Congregation Council Page 13
- Submit original Background Checks as required Page 14-15
- Submit to personal interview with a member of the Lay Ministry
Institute Board of Directors
- After you receive notice of acceptance to the program,
submit Tuition of \$1050 by Sept. 1, 2012 (unless alternate
payment arrangements have been made)

Classes will begin on Saturday, September 8, 2012.

Additional Requirements to Seek Authorization from the Bishop as an Authorized Lay Worship Leader

**These items are not required now, but are listed here for information. They will be required at the end of the ALWL program to be eligible for authorization by the bishop.*

*ELCA Standards Questionnaire—Authorized Lay Leaders Page 16-17

*Statement of Commitment—Authorized Lay Leaders Page 18

*Model Covenant with Mentor Pastor Page 19-20

Authorized Lay Worship Leaders

The term “authorized” in regard to the LMI lay leader programs carries a distinct meaning, and does not automatically apply to all LMI program participants. Most participants in LMI programs do so for the purpose of making their skills and gifts available as resources to the congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. At program’s end, these participants may receive the authorization of the bishop in addition to a certificate of completion. Authorization by the bishop assures congregations that such resource people have been adequately prepared, continue to develop their skills, and are accountable to the larger church.

The Board of the Lay Ministry Institute trains, examines, and recommends lay leaders to the bishop for authorization. In consultation with the Synod Council, the bishop approves, installs, and authorizes lay leaders for service in congregations. Authorized lay leaders are mentored by an ordained minister in a covenantal relationship, and comply with the authorized lay leaders’ code of practice. The bishop’s authorization of a lay leader is revisited annually upon the leader’s completion of requirements for continued authorization.

All participants in the Lay Worship Leaders program are required to receive the authorization of the bishop....It is because of our Lutheran theological understanding of ministry and in compliance with the “Guidelines Related to Synodically Authorized or Licensed Ministries” of the ELCA (CC95.04.47t) (**Appendix B**) that the Upper Susquehanna Synod requires any lay person who would preside at the Eucharist be authorized by the bishop to do so. The Authorized Lay Worship Leader program of the LMI equips the baptized well for this ministry.

*(from the **LMI Handbook**, pgs. 3-4)*

Personal Information

Full Name _____
Home Address _____
Home Phone _____ E-Mail _____
Date of Birth _____

Have you lived in a state other than Pennsylvania in your adult life? YES NO
Note: A "yes" answer may require submission of an additional background check form. Please see pgs. 15-16 for details.

Member of _____ Lutheran Church since _____
Church Address _____
Pastor's Name _____
If a member fewer than 5 years, list prior church membership and length of membership _____

Please describe your ministry involvement in your congregation, with approximate time frames, highlighting any leadership roles:

Please describe your leadership involvement in your conference, synod, region, or Churchwide expressions of the ELCA, with approximate time frames:

Family Information

Marital Status _____

If applicable, Spouse's Full Name _____

Spouse's Occupation _____

Children's Names and Ages _____

Educational Background

High School Date Received Diploma

College/Technical Diploma/Degree/ Date
School/Other Certificate Received Area of Study

Employment Background

Employer Dates of
 Employment Job Description & Title

References

List names, addresses, phone numbers, and titles of three persons who have known you for an extended period of time and who may be asked for written and/or verbal references. Do not include your pastor. Include your employer, if possible, and someone who is well acquainted with you and your family.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Spiritual Formation

1. Why do you want to participate in this LMI Lay Leader program?

2. In what ways, if any, will your family support you?

3. What are your special interests in church work?

4. What special gifts and skills do you have for your selected area of ministry?

5. Describe the studies you have undertaken and completed that would assist you in the LMI Lay Leader program.

6. Please describe any special needs you have that might impact your participation in the LMI Lay Leader program.

Release/Signature Page

- I have read the *Lay Ministry Institute Handbook* and understand what is expected of participants in programs of the Lay Ministry Institute. If my application is accepted, I will strive to meet those expectations, with the help of God.

Initial here → _____

- I authorize any references, mentors, instructors, congregations, or any other person or organization to give any information, including opinions, regarding my character and fitness for ministry to the Lay Ministry Institute Board of Directors and staff members of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.

I also release any such person or organization providing information from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may exist at any time on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

Initial here → _____

- I authorize the Upper Susquehanna Synod to receive and hold secure a copy of any background check records that I provide, keeping such content confidential to staff members of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. I understand that, should a background check raise a question about my fitness for ministry as an authorized lay leader, a staff member of the Upper Susquehanna Synod may inform the Lay Ministry Institute Board of Directors and provide such details as may be necessary.

Initial here → _____

- I certify that the information I supply for this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I willingly release this information to the Lay Ministry Institute Board of Directors and staff members of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA for the purpose of my participation in the Lay Ministry Institute Lay Leaders program to which I am applying.

Signature _____ *Date* _____

Autobiographical Essay

The autobiographical essay is a personal reflection in which you share your insights and understandings gained during the period of discernment leading to your decision to apply for an LMI program. It is not expected that your process of discernment is complete. You are asked only to provide an honest assessment of your current self-understanding.

The essay should be four to six pages in length, double spaced, and photocopy-ready. Please submit one copy of the essay to the Board of Directors of the Lay Ministry Institute through the office of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Keep a copy of this essay for yourself and bring it with you to your application interview.

Your essay should include the following:

- A discussion of the events, circumstances, and persons in your life that have affected your faith and your sense of call. If your sense of call is not clear at this point, please describe how others have encouraged you to explore the LMI Lay Leaders program;
- A description of your family of origin and how this has shaped who you are;
- A description of your current life situation including marital history and family situation, physical, and emotional health, financial situation, geographical restrictions, etc.;
- Reflections on your personal journey of faith and relationship to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Upper Susquehanna Synod, including your current church involvement;
- Reflections on your understanding of the ministry area to which you feel called, and your assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, gifts, convictions, and concerns related to this ministry.

Please send your completed essay to:

The Lay Ministry Institute
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
P.O. Box 36
Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Statement from Applicant's Pastor

Please print pgs. 10-12 for your pastor to complete, sign, and return, **along with his/her additional letter of reference**, to:

The Lay Ministry Institute
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
P.O. Box 36
Lewisburg, PA. 17837

If your pastor is not willing/able to serve as your Mentor Pastor during your training program, your designated Mentor Pastor should also complete, sign, and return this form.

Applicant's Name: _____

Pastor's Name: _____

Pastor, before completing this statement, please read the Lay Ministry Institute Handbook to become familiar with the LMI programs and the role of Mentor Pastors (also see excerpt below). For a copy of the LMI Handbook, see the synod website (www.uss-elca.org) or contact the synod office: 570-524-9778.

1. I recommend this applicant for admission to the Lay Ministry Institute Lay Leaders program. YES _____ NO _____

Comment _____

2. I support this applicant's desire to become an Authorized Lay Worship Leader of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. YES _____ NO _____

Comment _____

3. I support the authorized lay leader programs of the Lay Ministry Institute. YES _____ NO _____

Comment _____

4. I am willing to provide opportunities for the applicant to participate in parish ministries as appropriate to their area of training.

YES _____ NO _____

Comment _____

5. I am willing to serve as a Mentor Pastor for the applicant. I understand and agree to strive to meet the expectations for Mentor Pastors as outlined in the Lay Ministry Institute Handbook. YES _____ NO _____

Comment _____

6. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant in adulthood lived as a resident of a state other than Pennsylvania? YES _____ NO _____

7. Please include a letter of reference from you for the applicant.

Pastor's Signature _____ Date _____

Expectations for Mentor Pastors of Lay Leaders in Training

Mentoring pastors are a key partner in the training of lay leaders through programs of the Lay Ministry Institute, assisting the LMI Board and class instructors in a participant'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 participants as they engage in theological education and ministry practice. They provide valuable feedback both to participants and the LMI Board about a participant's development. Mentor Pastors invite and encourage participants to apply what they've learned in the own congregational setting through experiences of leadership in the participant's area of study.

A Mentor Pastor shall:

- Be an ordained minister on the roll of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.
- Be approved as a Mentor Pastor by the bishop.
- Clearly understand and be committed without reservation to the programs of the Lay Ministry Institute.

- Be an effective model for and guide to the LMI participant in their area of study.
- Maintain the Mentor Pastor relationship with the participant unless the relationship is terminated in consultation with the bishop.

The responsibilities of the Mentor Pastor are as follows:

- Participate in Mentor Pastor training as required.
- Willingly be available to meet and share with the participant throughout his/her training process:
 - Prior to each scheduled training session to offer resource materials and study suggestions.
 - Soon after each scheduled training session to reflect on the participant's learning experience and/or work.
 - These two responsibilities may be combined in one meeting.
- Provide appropriate leadership opportunities within the congregational setting for the participant.
 - Lay Worship Leaders in training are asked to lead worship quarterly beginning in October of their first year of training.
 - Lay Worship Leaders are asked to preach three times in the first year, and two times in the second year of training prior to April 1.
 - Lay Worship Leaders are asked to assist with Communion quarterly, including setting the table.
 - Other Lay Leaders in training are asked to take on specific leadership roles on occasion in their area of training.
- Provide thorough evaluations as requested by the LMI Board and the bishop on or before dates due. Evaluations include the initial letter of reference for the applicant, midpoint evaluations, and final evaluations.

(from the Lay Ministry Institute Handbook, pgs. 6-7)

Statement from Applicant's Congregation Council

Please request a letter of reference from your Congregation Council, asking them to submit the letter to:

The Lay Ministry Institute
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
P.O. Box 36
Lewisburg, PA. 17837

The letter may describe the Congregation Council's support for the applicant, what the Council sees as your strengths, and how the Council intends to support you.

Applying for a Background Check

All applicants seeking the authorization of the bishop to serve as authorized lay leaders of the Upper Susquehanna Synod are required to submit two different background checks: The *Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record* and *Child Abuse History Clearance*. (Note that an application for the *Child Abuse History Clearance* requires a copy of the *PA State Criminal History Record*.) Applicants who have resided in a state other than Pennsylvania as adults are also required to submit a *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal History Report*.

Applicants are required to submit originals of criminal history reports dated no more than one year prior to their application. Applicants may follow the procedures below for obtaining the required reports, or submit originals from reports already in their possession. A copy of each report will be made and retained in the applicant's file. Originals will be returned to the applicant.

Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record

Fee: \$10.00 (credit card or money order) payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:
<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

The Pennsylvania State Police has established a web-based computer application called "Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History" or PATCH. Eighty percent of the time, "No Record" certificates are returned immediately through the Internet to the requestor. The information provided by the requestor will be checked against the criminal history database maintained by the Pennsylvania State Police Central Repository. If the subject's query does not hit on any information in the database, the requestor will receive the results instantly over the Internet and the requestor can print out the "No Record" certificate. If the subject's information hits on something in the database, the requestor receives an immediate "Request Under Review" response. After a manual review the status will be updated to "No Record" or "Record." The requestor should check the PATCH website periodically for an updated status to their request. For all "No Record" responses, the certificate must be printed out at the requestor's computer. All "Record" responses will be mailed to the requestor at the address provided by the requestor. It may take up to two weeks for the status to be updated from a "Request Under Review" to a "No Record" or "Record."

Individuals are considered non-registered users. Non-registered users log onto <https://epatch.state.pa.us> and select "Submit a New Record Check" under **credit card users**. If the results show "No Record," be certain to print out the report showing this. Applicants may instead make their request by mail and **money order** using Form SP-

164, Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check.

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=4451&&PageID=458621&level=2&css=L2&mode=2>

- 1) Applicant may secure Form SP-164 from the schools, Pennsylvania State Police Barracks or from the Pennsylvania State Police web site under “Public Services”: www.psp.state.pa.us.
- 2) Send the REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK with payment to the following address: Pennsylvania State Police Central Repository-164, 1800 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758

For status of the Criminal Record Check, call (717) 783-9144.

Child Abuse History Clearance

Fee: \$10.00 (money order only) payable to Department of Public Welfare

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/searchresults/index.htm>

Go to the Department of Public Welfare site. Read the instructions before downloading the “Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form CY-113”:

http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ucmprd/groups/webcontent/documents/form/s_001762.pdf.

Note that a copy of your PROCESSED PA Criminal History Record (instructions on prior page) must be included with this application.

Required only of applicants who have resided as adults outside of Pennsylvania:

Federal (FBI) Criminal History Report

Fee: \$18.00 (money order, cashier’s check, or credit card) payable to Treasury of the United States; <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjisd/faqs.html>

Go to the FBI Identification Record Request page at

<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjisd/fprequest.htm>. Follow the detailed instructions for “Submitting an Identification Record Request to the FBI”.

Note: The copy of record is sent directly to the requestor. Note: the Upper Susquehanna Synod accepts the validity of an original report provided by an applicant (rather than requiring an intercessory agency, as some PA employers require by law).

***ELCA Standards Questionnaire—Authorized Lay Leaders**

**This form is provided only for your information now, as it is not required until you are seeking the Bishop's authorization at the completion of the Lay Worship Leader program.*

In accordance with the "Guidelines Related to Synodically Authorized or Licensed Ministries" (CC95.04.47t) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, all applicants seeking authorization as a lay leader in the Upper Susquehanna Synod must answer the following questions.

- No Yes 1. Are you familiar with the document Vision and Expectations?
 No Yes Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as an Authorized Lay Leader?
- No Yes 2. Do you have or have you had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as an Authorized Lay Leader?
- No Yes 3. Are there issues in your marriage or family situation that could adversely affect your ability to serve as an Authorized Lay Leader?
- No Yes 4. Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions?
- No Yes 5. Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical, or other improper behavior?
- No Yes 6. Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license?
- No Yes 7. Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?
- No Yes 8. Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?
- No Yes 9. Have you engaged in behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to continue as an Authorized Lay Leader?
- No Yes 10. Are you prepared to accept a request for your assistance from this synod based on the needs of the church which might require some travel outside of your own community?
- No Yes 11. Is there additional information that would assist the synodical bishop and board of the Lay Ministry Institute in considering your application or that you believe they should know? (see following page)

Information related to:

Information related to:

Information related to:

Information related to:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Mail to: Lay Ministry Institute, Upper Susquehanna Synod, PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

***Statement of Commitment—Authorized Lay Leaders**

**This form is provided only for your information now, as it is not required until you are seeking the Bishop's authorization at the completion of the Lay Worship Leader program.*

The term “authorized” in regard to the LMI lay leader programs carries a distinct meaning, and does not automatically apply to all LMI program participants. Most participants in LMI programs do so for the purpose of making their skills and gifts available as resources to the congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. At program’s end, these participants seek the authorization of the bishop in addition to a certificate of completion. Authorization by the bishop assures congregations that such resource people have been adequately prepared, continue to develop their skills, and are accountable to the larger church.

As a condition to apply to become an authorized lay leader or for continued authorization, please read, complete and sign the following Statement of Commitment for Authorized Lay Leaders:

As an Authorized Lay Leader of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, I shall...

- *Continue to live out my baptismal covenant as a disciple of Jesus Christ;*
- *Continue my participation as an active, communing, contributing member of _____ Lutheran Church, in _____, of the Upper Susquehanna Synod; (town)*
- *Carry out my ministry in accord with the Holy Scriptures and Creeds of the Church;*
- *Accept and adhere to the Lutheran Confessions as true and faithful expositions of the Gospel;*
- *Willingly serve in response to the needs of the synod;*
- *Uphold my covenant with my Mentor, the Rev. _____, as outlined in our covenant agreement (copy provided to synod);*
- *Lead an ethical and moral life in accordance with the standards described in “Vision and Expectations” of the ELCA.*

I promise to do these things, and I ask God to help me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to:

The Lay Ministry Institute
Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
P.O. Box 36
Lewisburg, PA 17837

***Model Covenant: Authorized Lay Worship Leader**

**This form is provided only for your information now, as it is not required until you are seeking the Bishop's authorization at the completion of the Lay Worship Leader program.*

(required elements are in BOLD)

*In order to share my God-given gifts as contributions to the mission of Christ's church, to preserve good order, and to facilitate my accountability to the Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, I make this covenant with _____,
my Mentor:*

I have reviewed the authorized lay leaders' Code of Practice (*Lay Ministry Institute Handbook*) and agree to abide by its expectations.

I commit to the following continuing education experience(s) in the next calendar year, totaling at least four contact hours: _____.
I will meet with you shortly after the experience to discuss it.

We agree to meet _____ (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually) to review my ministry experiences, and to discuss my strengths and growing edges. I/you will initiate our meeting times.

If requested by my pastor, I agree to provide worship leadership in my own congregation no less than _____ time(s) this year. If requested by other pastors, I agree to provide worship leadership in other congregations no less than _____ time(s) this year.

When preparing to preach at this or another congregation, I will spend adequate time in study of the day's appointed lessons and the liturgical season's themes, in order that my sermon may be true to the Gospel and Lutheran doctrine. When asked, I will provide you with a manuscript of each sermon for review either prior to or after its proclamation.

If I should be approached by a member of a congregation seeking pastoral care, I will gently remind them that I am not a pastor and encourage them to seek their pastor's care.

I will not use my position as an authorized lay leader to seek or accept undue influence within a congregation, but will seek always to be a servant leader in the style of Jesus.

When I speak of you publicly or privately, I will interpret your actions in the most positive light, following Martin Luther's interpretation of the Eighth Commandment in his catechisms. If I should disagree with you on a matter of significance, I will bring it to your attention following our Lord's guidance in Matthew 18:15-17.

I understand that, should you alert me that you are unable to keep this covenant, it is my responsibility to initiate a new covenant with an ordained minister of the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

Signed, _____
(Authorized Lay Worship Leader) _____
Date

Signed, _____
(Mentor) _____
Date

***Model Covenant: Mentor Pastor**
(required elements are in BOLD)

In order to encourage the God-given gifts of this authorized lay leader as contributions to the mission of Christ's church, to preserve good order, and to facilitate my accountability and his/hers to the Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, I make this covenant with you,
_____ (name of authorized lay leader):

I have reviewed the *Lay Ministry Institute Handbook* and understand what is expected of you as an authorized lay leader and what is expected of me as your Mentor. I agree to abide by these expectations for serving as your Mentor.

We agree to meet _____ (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually) to review your ministry experiences, your continuing education experience(s), and to discuss your strengths and growing edges. I/you will initiate our meeting times.

I commit to reviewing any sermon manuscripts that you provide, when possible in advance of their proclamation. I will ask you to provide at least _____ (number) sermon manuscript(s) in the next calendar year for review either prior to or after their proclamation.

When I speak of you publicly or privately, I will interpret your actions in the most positive light, following Martin Luther's interpretation of the Eighth Commandment in his catechisms. If I should disagree with you on a matter of significance, I will bring it to your attention following our Lord's guidance in Matthew 18:15-17.

Should I be unable to keep this covenant, I will alert you as soon as possible to allow you time to find a new Mentor.

Signed, _____
(Mentor) _____
Date

Signed, _____
(Authorized Lay Leader) _____
Date

Both mentoring partners should retain copies of these covenants. The authorized lay leader is to submit one copy of each to the LMI, Upper Susquehanna Synod, PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837.