

## **2009-2011 APPLICATION**

**for Lay Leaders 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 your church office, the synod website ([www.uss-elca.org](http://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](http://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**

- |                          |  |             |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Read <u>Lay Ministry Institute Handbook</u>            | See Page 1  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Application Form                                       | Pages 3-8   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Release/Signature Page                                 | Page 9      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Autobiographical Essay                                 | Page 10     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Statement from the Applicant's Pastor                  | Pages 11-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Statement from the Applicant's<br>Congregation Council | Page 14     |

### **Additional Requirements for Applicants Seeking Authorization from the Bishop** *(see page 3-4 for further explanation)*

- |                          |  |            |
|--------------------------|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | "ELCA Standards Questionnaire"<br>--Authorized Lay Leaders | Page 15-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | "Statement of Commitment"<br>--Authorized Lay Leaders      | Page 17    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Submit original background checks as required              | Page 18-19 |

For more details about the authorization of lay leaders,  
please consult the *Lay Ministry Institute Handbook*.

## LMI Lay Leader Programs

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.

Some who apply for and complete a program of the Lay Ministry Institute may do so with the sole intent of assisting their own congregations in ministry. Such participants are welcome, receiving the same education and support as other program participants, and a certificate of completion at program’s end. Except for Lay Worship Leaders, such participants in lay leader programs do not need authorization from the bishop to serve in their own congregations.

*Please indicate the LMI Lay Leader program to which you are applying, checking “authorized” if you intend to receive the bishop’s authorization at program’s end.*

- Lay Worship Leaders** are trained to lead worship, preach, and preside in congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. With the bishop’s written permission an Authorized Lay Worship Leader may preside at the Eucharist of a particular congregation on a specific date. *This is the only LMI program in which all applicants must seek the bishop’s authorization at program’s end.*
- Lay Evangelists** are trained to tell the story of the Gospel in various ways, and to encourage and train others to do the same.
- Authorized Lay Evangelists** are authorized by the bishop to offer their gifts as resources to other congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod.
- Lay Catechists** are trained to assist in a congregation’s catechetical (Christian education) ministries.
- Authorized Lay Catechists** are authorized by the bishop to offer their gifts as resources to other congregations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

## 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 page #18 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:

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

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## 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  
School/Other

Diploma/Degree/  
Certificate

Date  
Received

Area of Study

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Employment Background

Employer

Dates of  
Employment

Job Description & Title

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

## 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?

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

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3. What are your special interests in church work?

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

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

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

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## 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.

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## Statement from Applicant's Pastor

Please print pages 11-13 for your pastor to complete, sign, and return, **along with his/her 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](http://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. *(If applicable—not all participants seek authorization)*

I support this applicant's desire to become an authorized lay 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 \_\_\_\_\_

*(from the Lay Ministry Institute Handbook.)*

### **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.

## **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.

## ELCA Standards Questionnaire—Authorized Lay Leaders

*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: Ordained Ministers?  
 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

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 of the Upper Susquehanna Synod;*
- *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: Ordained Ministers” 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

## **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 Report*. (Note that an application for the *Child Abuse Report* 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 (certified check, money order, or credit card) payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

<http://www.psp.state.pa.us/psp/cwp/browse.asp?A=15&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=70427>

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 information 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.

Applicants may instead make their request by mail using Form SP-164, Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check.

<http://www.psp.state.pa.us/psp/cwp/view.asp?A=4&Q=48275>

1) Applicant may secure Form SP-164 from the schools, Pennsylvania State Police Barracks or from the Pennsylvania State Police web site:

[www.psp.state.pa.us](http://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 Report**

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

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/ChildWelfare/003671038.htm>

Go to the Department of Public Welfare site at

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/ChildWelfare/003671038.htm>.

Read the instructions before downloading the form:

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Resources/Documents/Pdf/FillInForms/DPWchildabus.e.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, certified 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

“How to Request a Copy of Record.” 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).