

## *Vision and Expectations*

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod equips leaders for mission and ministry by providing foundational theological education through its partnership with Trinity Lutheran Seminary, leadership development through sessions on various ministry applications, and spiritual formation through relationships with other participants and mentors.

Upon successful completion of the ELMM process, individuals are recognized by the Bishop and Synod Assembly. We celebrate their commitment to spiritual growth and faith formation and their desire to share their gifts and live Godly lives.

Thus prepared and recognized, a person is eligible to serve as a Commissioned Leader in their congregation as deemed appropriate by their pastor and congregation council. No congregation is obligated to commission one who has completed the ELMM process.

Commissioned Leaders are co-workers in ministry with Ministers of Word and Sacrament (ordained pastors) and Ministers of Word and Service (deacons.) They understand constitutional requirements for ordained ministers to preach the word and administer the sacraments, and synodical bishops' responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Commissioned Leaders support their pastors and help their congregations understand that as the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are church together.

Those who complete the ELMM process may serve on Synod committees at the invitation of the Bishop or the Bishop's staff and/or they may sense a call to serve in their community in some way. The Bishop is under no obligation to invite them to serve on Synod committees nor to recommend them for, or place them in, community service roles. This holds true regardless of whether they are commissioned by their congregation for specific areas of ministry.

Individuals who complete the ELMM process are not appointed by the bishop to serve in place of a congregation's pastor, nor are they authorized by the bishop to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. This holds true regardless of whether they are commissioned by their congregation for specific areas of ministry.

## *Board of Governors*

The ELMM Board of Governors is comprised of the ELMM Administrator, Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop, one rostered leader, and two lay leaders.

The Board meets two to three times per year to review and accept new participants. They provide support and accountability to the administrator and oversight of the program's financial wellbeing.



[www.elmm.org](http://www.elmm.org)

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**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

## Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry

### *Vision*

A community of scripturally-grounded, mission-driven, spirit-led disciples

### *Mission*

To equip leaders for mission and ministry

### *Guiding Principles*

- The church needs equipped leaders
- Scripturally-grounded disciples lead with confidence
- Mission-driven disciples energize the church
- Spirit-led disciples encourage and empower others

### *Objectives*

- Discern baptismal vocation
- Experience spiritual growth and faith formation
- Develop foundational knowledge of the Scriptures from the Lutheran perspective
- Cultivate critical thinking skills
- Acquire confidence in public speaking

## Description

Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM) is a three-year process consisting of 12 Friday-Saturday retreats that include biblical instruction and training sessions. (**Effective September 2020, sessions are offered virtually on Saturdays to comply with COVID-19 safety requirements.**)

Biblical instruction is led by college and seminary professors, often from Trinity Lutheran Seminary. This provides a deeper look into the scriptures than lay leaders might find in their own congregations.

In the past, these biblical instruction sessions were complimented by introduction to a variety of ministry topics: Boundaries for Lay Leaders, Creeds and Sacraments, Ecumenism, Worship and Liturgy, etc.

Beginning in 2019, these topical learning experiences are folded into new training sessions: Lutheran Bible Study Leader, Stewardship Specialist, Assisting Minister, Community Catalyst and Pastoral Care Assistant.

ELMM participants are encouraged to also attend events sponsored by our synod and other organizations.



The textbook, *Witnesses to the Word*, written by Trinity Lutheran Seminary faculty, provides an overview of the Bible and covers a wide variety of topics. The retreats may be supplemented with sessions on church practices and other topics relevant to ministry in our congregations and communities.

## Getting Started

Prospective participants may contact the Administrator for an application. The application process includes three references, one of whom must be the current pastor. Participants may begin the program at any time during the three-year rotation.

Although it is anticipated that participants will use what they learn in various leadership roles in their home congregation and their communities, it is also valid for an individual to enter the process for their personal spiritual growth and faith formation.

The best way for a prospective participant to discern whether ELMM is right for them at this point in their faith journey is to attend a retreat.

## Completion

Consistent attendance is strongly encouraged to promote the participant's progress and growth. Many participants return and attend sessions a second or third time after the three-year rotation is complete.

Regular conversation between participants and their pastors and congregational councils is expected, involving the Board of Governors as is helpful or necessary. A covenant agreement may be used to provide some structure for these conversations and the participant's progress.

These conversations should include the participant's reflections on what they have learned, their sense of calling to a particular area of ministry, exploration of opportunities to serve in these areas, etc. It is recommended these conversations occur at least twice a year.

Should a pastor or congregation council feel any concerns because of these conversations, the pastor, participant, and administrator should discuss them as early as possible. The participants are expected to support the work of the pastor and enhance the ministries of their congregation, and/or find opportunities for ministry in their communities.

Participants will receive a certificate upon completion and be recognized by the Bishop and Synod Assembly. Although the certificate grants no particular privileges, leaders who complete the program *may* be commissioned by their home congregations for particular areas of ministry. Note that no congregation is under any obligation to commission one who completes the program.

## Costs

- Tuition: \$200 per year. This helps pay for programming and administrative costs.
- Retreats: \$50 (Saturday) and \$25 (Friday)
- Resources: Additional charges for resources may be added to the tuition and retreat costs.

### WHEN IN-PERSON EVENTS RESUME

- Lodging and meals: Participants pay for their own lodging and dinner on Friday, when events are held in person.
- Transportation: Participants are responsible for transportation to and from events.

A participant's congregation may contribute toward the cost of the program. Scholarship applications are available from the Administrator. Financial need should not prevent anyone from entering or completing the program.