

Lutheran Church of the Cross Pastoral and Ministry Leadership Training Support

Purpose:

Lutheran Church of the Cross has the desire and commitment to support those who are called to work in pastoral and other vocational ministry leadership positions. The support of the church includes recruiting believers for pastoral and other ministry leadership positions as well as providing spiritual and financial assistance while the student pursues any necessary training.

Lutheran Church of the Cross (hereafter referred to as LCC) recommends either of two tracks for achieving required educational credentials: an approved seminary or church based theological education program.

Candidates for pastoral and ministry leadership training support will be reviewed and approved based on faith, training program, and an anticipated ministry goal which furthers the mission and values held by the congregation of LCC.

The mission of LCC is to challenge all people to find a living relationship with God in Jesus Christ, and to actively support growth in their faith

The values of LCC are that:

- We believe Jesus is Lord
- We Stand on the Word of God
- We Desire Genuine Worship
- We are Called By God
- We Are Free in Christ
- We Will "Go and Make Disciples"
- We Celebrate God is Changing Lives

Support Provided:

Two types of support are available to those selected for pastoral and ministry leadership training:

Spiritual support:

Spiritual support will be provided through a mentor (a member of the LCC congregation) appointed by the Board of Spiritual Oversight (hereafter referred to as BSO) to be the student's primary spiritual support contact. Prayer, regular communication (with the student, to the BSO, and to the congregation), coaching, and accountability are examples of the various aspects of the mentoring relationship that may provide the student with the spiritual support, encouragement, and growth required during this process.

Financial support:

A maximum stipend for tuition assistance of \$5,000.00 per year may be available. Any financial award will be determined by the BSO, based on the eligibility criteria, and dependent upon the available resources allocated for tuition assistance in the annual budget. Payments will be made directly to the educational institution once all necessary approvals are finalized.

Although it is the desire of the congregation to continue financial support for students engaged in pastoral and ministry leadership training, financial support is subject to students' continued eligibility and adequate funding of the program in the church budget.

General Eligibility Requirements:

- Candidates must profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and subscribe to the tenet of John 14:6 where Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- Candidates must subscribe to and demonstrate the mission and values of LCC.
- Candidates must be working toward a degree in a seminary or church based theological education program that is fully accredited by its accrediting association(s).
- Candidates must establish and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA (a "B" cumulative grade point average) and/or master all competencies to fulfill portfolio requirements according to agreed upon timelines.
- Candidates must submit all necessary documentation according to approved timelines.
- Candidates must successfully meet all "Criteria for Selection" described below.

Specific Eligibility Criteria for Selection:

- A career intention to provide pastoral or vocational ministry leadership in a congregational setting.
- Commitment and action consistent with LCC's mission and values [Applicant Screening Form].
- Consistent demonstration of leadership characteristics as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-4, 6, 7; Titus 1:6-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Overall spiritual maturity..... is a mature Christian
Above reproach..... has a good Christian reputation, among believers and non-Christians.
Marital Faithfulness..... is faithful to his/her spouse
Temperate..... maintains balance in their Christian experience
Prudent..... is wise and discerning
Respectable..... life is a good reflection of the life of Jesus Christ
Hospitable..... is generous
Able to teach..... communicates well, even to those with whom they disagree
Not addicted to wine..... controls obsessions and compulsions
Not self-willed..... relates well to other people without being self-centered and controlling
Not quick-tempered..... able to control anger
Not pugnacious..... does not commit any form of verbal or physical abuse
Gentle..... is objective and fair-minded in relationships with others
Uncontentious..... avoids getting into arguments
Free from the love of money..... is not materialistic
One who manages his/her own household well..... functions within their family according to God's plan
Loving what is good..... overcomes evil with good
Just..... is just and fair in their relationships with others
Devout..... life reflects God's holiness
Disciplined..... lives a disciplined Christian life

- Knowledge and demonstration of personal spiritual gifts as acknowledged by LCC.
- Reasonable and timely progression toward completion of an approved academic program

- Financial need

Selection Process:

Decision-makers will use the following steps to determine the level of financial award.

Step One: Written Documentation:

A candidate must submit to the Board of Spiritual Oversight:

- A completed “Application for Pastoral and Ministry Leadership Training Support.”
- A written essay which includes:
 - A personal statement of faith.
 - The anticipated course of study, the reasons for selecting the chosen training institution/program, and how this training will prepare them for the ministry for which they have been called.
 - Their understanding of the specific ministry for which they have been called and intend to serve.
 - The ways in which their calling, training, and anticipated ministry align with the stated mission and values of LCC.
 - A description of the spiritual gifts God has granted them.
- Three letters of recommendation which attest to the candidates’ faith and assess their leadership characteristics as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-4, 6, 7; Titus 1:6-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Step Two: Screening:

A Screening Committee of at least two members appointed by the Board of Spiritual Oversight will review and rate the application, written essay, and letters of recommendation using the Applicant Screening Form. If additional information or clarification of any aspect of the written documentation is needed, the Screening Committee may contact the applicant. The Screening Committee will forward each candidate’s written documentation, a completed Applicant Screening Form, and an approved or denied recommendation to the BSO. The applicant may be denied further consideration at this point.

Step Three: Personal Interview:

The Board of Spiritual Oversight will interview each candidate recommended for approval by the Screening Committee. The personal interview will enable the BSO to further discern the match between the candidate’s choice of training program and vocational ministry goal, the candidate’s demonstration of leadership characteristics and spiritual gifts, and the candidate’s affirmation of the mission and values of LCC. In addition, the BSO will discuss with the candidate possible congregational members from whom the BSO may choose to appoint to serve as the student’s primary spiritual support contact (mentor).

Step Four: Final Determination:

The Board of Spiritual Oversight will make the final determination. If the proposed vocational ministry degree program is approved, the BSO will determine the type(s) of spiritual and level of financial support to be provided.

A member(s) of the Board of Spiritual Oversight will meet personally with each interviewed candidate to deliver the decision of the BSO and discuss how support, if any, will be provided.

Each approved candidate will be appointed a mutually agreed upon mentor. The student’s mentor will communicate with the student as agreed upon (a minimum of once per

quarter) to pray, coach, encourage, supervise, hold accountable, and/or assist as appropriate. The student will be introduced to their mentor at the time of the acceptance meeting. The mentor will also facilitate communication and support within the congregation

Step Five: Written Confirmation

A written letter of confirmation will be sent to the candidate including necessary instructions.

An award letter including the policies and procedures for payment will be sent to the seminary or church based theological education program.

Timelines/Deadlines:

Seminary Track:

A candidate's application, written essay and references must be received by the Chair of the BSO by June 15 of the year preceding entrance into the selected seminary.

Church Based Theological Education (C-BTE) Track

A candidate's application, written essay and references for any church based theological education (C-BTE) program must be received by the Chair of the BSO. No formal deadlines apply, but all required materials must be submitted in a timely manner (twelve (12) weeks prior to enrollment) to allow sufficient time for the decision making process to occur.

Distribution of Financial Support:

Tuition payments for selected applicants will be paid by the church directly to the educational institution in equal installments after successful completion (a 'B' GPA or mastery of portfolio competencies) of the first semester or course of study. Funds are not payable directly to the applicant.

Duration of Support:

Financial support is not automatically renewed for successive school years. Current recipients must maintain communication with their mentor (primary support contact) and submit a Pastoral and Ministry Leadership Training Support Annual Review by June 15 of each year in anticipation of financial support for the following year.

Recipient Obligations:

Recipients of spiritual and financial support must maintain their commitment to the mission and values subscribed to by LCC, demonstrate continued growth in leadership characteristics, and continue to refine their spiritual gifts throughout the time they receive support from LCC.

Students attending a seminary must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average ('B' GPA) and progress through their plan of study in a reasonable and timely manner.

Students completing a church based theological education program must regularly meet with the "local faculty" and successfully complete all portions of the competency based portfolio according to timelines established in agreement with the local and associate faculty.