

Guidelines for Congregations with a Lay Leadership Institute Graduate

Introduction

Congratulations! Your congregation has been blessed with a man who has completed all twelve courses of the South Dakota District Lay Leadership Institute (LLI). Thank you for your partnership and support as he was going through the LLI program. Having completed the LLI program, this man now desires to serve the Lord and assist the pastor in his ministry in your congregation. This document is meant to give you some information and guidance on how to utilize this man in your congregation so that he may effectively serve the pastor and your congregation.

Purpose of LLI

The South Dakota District Lay Leadership Institute was created to provide lay people in the South Dakota District with an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Old and New Testament, Christian doctrine, church history, etc. The LLI program was also created to provide training to certain laymen, with consent from their congregation and the approval of the pastor, to provide greater assistance to the pastor in his ministry. In addition to courses in Old and New Testament, Christian doctrine, and church history, men at Level 3 of the LLI program also complete courses in pastoral care, Lutheran worship, Gospel outreach, teaching the faith, and homiletics (preaching). After completing the LLI program, these laymen are equipped to assist the pastor in certain ministry areas.

What Do You Call an LLI Graduate?

Some congregations may wish to confer a title upon the layman who has completed the LLI program to indicate to the congregation that this man has been trained to assist the pastor in carrying out his ministry. An appropriate title for a layman who has completed the LLI program would be “Assistant to the Pastor.” It would also be appropriate, should the layman be given responsibility to assist the pastor in a particular area of ministry, to provide him with a specific title such as: “Assistant to the Pastor for Christian Education,” “Assistant to the Pastor for Pastoral Care,” or “Assistant to the Pastor for Youth Ministry.”

Trained to Serve

It is to be understood that the pastor is the one called by the congregation to shepherd the flock under his care. The layman who has completed the LLI program is not an ordained pastor nor should there be any expectation that he could take the place of the called and ordained pastor. All ministry carried out by the LLI graduate is done under the supervision and approval of the called and ordained pastor of that congregation. The LLI graduate is not allowed to perform any

sacramental acts—perform baptisms or consecrate the elements for the Lord’s Supper nor conduct any special acts—confirmations, weddings, etc. The LLI graduate is permitted by the pastor and congregation to assist that pastor in his ministry in that congregation alone. The LLI graduate cannot be “loaned out” to other congregations to provide pulpit supply for another pastor or teach a Bible class in a neighboring congregation.

Again, it must be stressed that the layman who has completed the LLI program serves with permission of the congregation and with the permission, approval, and supervision of the called and ordained pastor of the congregation. The layman who has completed the LLI program is trained and able to assist the pastor in the following ways:

Worship

He is trained to lead Lutheran worship, according to the traditional Lutheran liturgy, in a respectful and solemn way, that recognizes and acknowledges the presence of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the act of worship. He is **not** trained, nor should he be expected, to produce or write a special order of service for the congregation.

He is not able to pronounce the absolution, as the called and ordained pastor would, in the worship service. He is also not permitted to lead the Communion liturgy or consecrate the bread and wine for the Lord’s Supper. At the conclusion of the worship service, he should use the general blessing for the people.

Preaching

He is trained to preach a sermon prepared by the pastor or preach a sermon that he has prepared himself and that has been approved by the pastor.

Teaching

He has received training in the Old and New Testament, how to faithfully interpret Scripture, and Christian doctrine. He has also been instructed on how to develop lesson plans and on ways to teach the Christian faith to young and old. He can teach Sunday school, youth group, or adult Bible class. He is able to teach a lesson that has been prepared by someone else, e.g. the pastor or a video based Bible study from Concordia Publishing House or Lutheran Hour Ministries. Should he put together his own Bible study, the pastor should look over and approve the Bible study he has prepared. Bible studies on difficult books of the Bible, e.g. Daniel or Revelation, or on complex topics of theology are better left to the called and ordained pastor.

Visitation

He is equipped to assist the pastor in making a variety of visits to congregation members and non-members. He is capable of visiting members in their homes, in the hospital, and in the nursing home. He is equipped to read Scripture to them and pray with them. He should not provide them with the Lord’s Supper, even if the pastor has previously consecrated the bread and

wine. This only causes confusion between the role of the pastor and his assistant. He is able to make visits to those who have visited the church or are new members of the congregation. He can make evangelism calls and visit delinquent members and encourage them to become active in the worship life of the congregation. Some visits will be more appropriate for the pastor to make, such as visits to those seeking Holy Baptism, those wishing to receive Holy Communion, or those struggling with serious doubts about their Christian faith. He should not be expected to make emergency calls to the hospital or nursing home where the death of an individual is imminently possible, unless there is absolutely no way for the/a pastor to make the call himself. He is also not trained in any kind of counseling techniques and should not be expected to counsel with individuals needing that type of assistance.

Reporting Requirement

Every year the layman who has completed the LLI program at level 3 and is actively being used to assist the pastor in his congregation is expected to complete an annual reporting form. The reporting form, available from the South Dakota District Office, asks the lay man to report on three areas: 1. Specific service to the congregation and the pastor. 2. Accountability to the congregation and pastor. 3. Continuing education or self-study on theological topics and/or spiritual care. This allows the South Dakota District to monitor how the layman is being used within his congregation, ensures that the layman is receiving adequate supervision of his work, and makes sure that the layman is continuing to learn and grow in his Christian faith and in his ability to assist the pastor.

It is hoped that this document has provided you with the necessary guidance to assist your congregation in utilizing your LLI graduate. Should questions arise regarding the service of an LLI graduate within the congregation in assisting the pastor, those inquiries should be directed to the South Dakota District President. He may be reached by calling (605) 361-1514.