

Leadership Program for Musicians

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Leadership Program for Musicians

The Leadership Program for Musicians is a joint project of the ELCA and Episcopal Churches. It is a national program covering key areas in church music education. This vital and interesting program, "LPM" (for Leadership Program for Musicians) will be offered in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod beginning in September at Kinsmen Lutheran Church, 12100 Champion Forest Drive, in Houston.

Dr. John Marsh, Director of Worship and the Arts at Kinsmen, was one of the founders of the program in Texas and has served on its faculty. Other prominent church musicians from across the greater Houston area will also serve as faculty as well as guest lecturers. The development of the program is in response to many concerns: cuts in funding for music programs, whether in churches or in school systems; church musicians are often working in small churches, struggling with new ways of doing things because they are not familiar with the our traditions; young people, who have the potential skills to be a congregation's musician, need encouragement and support, as do established musicians, who value an opportunity to gather and learn from one another. In addition, clergy and laity with an interest in the music of the church will find these courses a boost to their worship lives.

The program can be taken in part or whole; in other words, you can take only the classes which interest you. However if all course requirements are met, a diploma is awarded at the successful completion of the program. Classes call on participants' imagination and creativity, asking them to explore the different opportunities music in worship presents, such as diverse

ethnic repertoires and styles and music's role in evangelism, parish liturgy, and parish life. Attention is particularly given to the needs and ways of small churches. Clergy as well as musicians and laity are encouraged to take part; attention is given to forming good musician-clergy relations. Ideally, more than one person from each parish would take part. As well as established church musicians, young people with potential talent should be sought out and encouraged.

The program's ultimate goals are to give participants an increased sense of vocational awareness, commitment to music ministry, and self worth as lay ministers, to improve their musical, pastoral, and leadership skills, and to expand their own and their parishes' visions of the variety of music and leadership practices that are appropriate to the liturgies of the church and its members' life of faith.

What's in it for me?

Here is a summary of each course and the type of work that you are asked to do.

I. Philosophy of Music Leadership/Ministry

This course helps participants to define their role as leaders in music and worship and to explore that role from the perspectives of history, theology, and pastoral concern. You assess your own parish's situation and the importance of recognizing and using the gifts members of your congregations have to offer. The use of the voice for music leadership is emphasized. Students are asked to write a short paper summarizing their theological understanding of church music and to lead a group in singing several pieces of music of different forms and styles.

II. Teaching New Music to the Congregation

This course helps you train both congregations and less able choirs. The background and analysis of hymns and tunes, and ways in which to introduce different kinds of

music not previously experienced by your congregation, are studied. Hands-on practice with the group is included so that all can "have a go" with the encouragement of their peers. Your assignment is to teach a hymn, song, or service music selection in one of several situations, such as to an intergenerational group attending a parish supper.

III. Leadership of Congregational Song

This course helps you develop the skills to lead the congregation in singing hymns, song, and service music. Teaching is given both to keyboard players, whether on organ, piano or synthesizer, and to those who play a non-keyboard instrument (guitars or other instruments). Emphasis is placed on adapting music to a given situation, and you learn to adapt two-staff music for organ, prepare arrangement for guitar and melody instruments, realize the notation used in the psalms, and look at the principles of improvisation. Assignments include teaching and leading the group in singing music of many different types and styles.

IV. Survey of Christian Hymnody: The Lutheran Book of Worship

This survey covers historical analysis and playing and singing of materials in various styles. You also explore the resources of the hymnal's accompaniment edition and look particularly at material new to this hymnal. Other books include The Hymnal Companion and The Book of Occasional Services. Assignments involve writing an entry for your bulletin on the hymns used and preparing a service such as Vespers or an Easter Vigil service.

V. Liturgy and Liturgical Planning: Foundations for Christian Worship

This course uses the LBW and Marion Hatchett's Guide to the Practice of Church Music as starting points, with emphasis on developing cooperation between clergy and musician. Aims include developing awareness of

the congregation's pastoral needs and the use of negotiating skills, the church year, and the role of silence in worship. Your assignment is to plan several different liturgies, such as Sunday morning communion, Vespers, a funeral, a wedding, and to write about the liturgical circumstances for which you have planned.

VI. Resources for an Effective Music Program

This course looks at the congregations and worship committees, and at the help we need for our jobs, local resources, methods of communication, networks, and collegial assistance. It also covers practical concerns such as simplifying music for particular situations, arranging hymns and service music as anthems, children/youth choirs, handbells, and developing skills in critical thinking and analysis as a help in decision making. Assessment is done by class discussion, and a short paper outlining your plans to develop and strengthen your church's music program.

VII. Principles of Choral Leadership

This class consists of two five-week courses:
Conducting for Church Musicians and Voice Training for Choirs

If you have ANY questions about the LPM program, contact John Marsh at Kinsmen Lutheran Church, 12100 Champion Forest Drive, Houston 77066. Phone 281-444-3127, ext. 231. E-mail:

jmarsh@kinsmenlutheran.org. A descriptive brochure with complete information will be mailed out in early summer to clergy and musicians in the synod. Scholarships are available.

For general information about the Leadership Program for Musicians, visit their website at www.lpm-online.org.

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