

PART D



The Parish Lay Ministry Academy is entering its eighteenth year! Since our first graduating class in 2002, the academy has had over 170 lay leaders graduate from the program. Many PLMs have gone on to earn MDivs and serve, or have served, as pastors in NT-NL congregations. Others serve, or have served, as SAWLs and have been an incredible blessing to our synod.

The Spanish language track of the academy was a part of the original vision and has trained dozens of candidates who serve as leaders in our Latino congregations. Some of them have even gone on to be instructors in the PLMA! Classes were held at Calvary Lutheran, Richland Hills, until the completion of the Leadership Center at Briarwood.

The transition has allowed us to do long distance learning, and I don't have to make lunch anymore! With the move, the curriculum was updated to allow more flexibility in course selection while keeping the certified lay ministry track. We've been blessed by many NT-NL pastors who have served as teachers, as well as the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Russel Vardell who served as dean until 2016 when a PLM, Dr. Frank Swehosky, took on the role of interim Dean. I am thankful for his commitment and leadership through the time of transition.

I am honored to take on the role of Dean this year. I have been a part of the PLMA since its inception, so it is near and dear to my heart.

We have moved the registration process to the synod office, and I appreciate the work Tyna Oslie and Jeanne Heggen have already done to make this happen. My role will be to recruit and support our instructors, lead worship, plan and arrange for the yearly graduation service, as well as teach. We will be identifying PLMs in NT-NL conferences and asking them to take on a public role of promoting the PLMA.

We are grateful for your prayers and continued support. I am optimistic and hopeful for the future of the PLMA and look forward to what God has in store for us. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Phil Heinze
Dean of the Academy