

Leadership for Faithful Innovation

Process Overview for Pastors

What Is the Journey?

God is up to something new. We believe the Holy Spirit is moving ahead of the church, calling the church into a new future in a time of disruptive social and cultural change. This presents some new leadership challenges for the local church. Luther Seminary and many synods are recognizing that even pastors who are really good at leading in the local church are facing challenges which they don't know how to address. These pastors often feel isolated in their work. This journey is designed to connect pastors, synod leaders, congregations, and the seminary into a new kind of generative learning community which provides enough depth, longevity, space, structure, and support to innovate faithfully in today's world. Together, we will engage ancient spiritual practices and cutting-edge innovation theory as we discover ways to join God in cultivating Christian faith in community. Rather than work harder at old ministry patterns that are breaking down, we will seek to identify and embody together faithful ways to lead the church more deeply into God's life and love for the world.

How Does it Unfold?

The Leadership for Faithful Innovation journey is designed around peer learning cohorts with approximately five other pastors in your synod over a period of three years. We call these Pastor Learning Communities (Pastor LC). There are also two other types of learning communities: Synod Learning Communities and Congregation Learning Communities. Leaders from each participating synod form a learning community throughout the process with the Luther Seminary grant team (Synod LC); and a lay team from each pastor's congregation forms a local learning community in the final two years (Congregation LC).

The basic rhythm of work includes in-person trainings in the fall, winter, and spring of each of the three years (fall 2018-fall 2021) and monthly Zoom video conference coaching in between. Pastors will be given practices to introduce into their own leadership contexts that help them and their communities *listen* more deeply to God, each other, and neighbors; *reconnect* to and be led by God; *define* the underlying challenges facing them; *reframe* expectations for church membership and leadership; and *cultivate* new ways of being church that foster faithful innovation.

Leadership for Faithful Innovation Timeline

FALL 2018	WINTER 2019	SPRING 2019
Monthly Zoom coaching of Pastor LC by Luther faculty/staff		
Training with Pastor Learning Community (LC) in your synod led by Luther Seminary faculty/staff and synod leader(s)		
Pastors LC: Practices of listening and reconnecting	Pastors LC: Practices of defining	Pastors LC: Practices of reframing
FALL 2019	WINTER 2020	SPRING 2020
Monthly Zoom coaching of Pastor LC by Luther faculty/staff		
Congregation LC training coupled with Pastor LC training in your synod led by Luther Seminary faculty/staff and synod leader(s)		
Pastors LC: Practices of cultivating		
FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021
Monthly Zoom coaching of Pastor LC by Luther faculty/staff		
Congregation LC training coupled with Pastor LC training in your synod led by Luther Seminary faculty/staff and synod leader(s)		
Pastors LC: Practices of cultivating		
FALL 2021	Congregation Lay Team LC and Pastor LC wrap-up training in your synod led by Luther Seminary faculty/staff and synod leader(s). Sharing of learnings and planning next steps.	

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Process Overview

The steps of the Leadership for Faithful Innovation process build on each other over time. While the steps unfold in sequence, they are designed to be iterative—repeating in various forms as they become practices/habits that reshape congregational life and leadership.

Overview of the five steps:

Key Practices Might Include:



Listen

The way forward begins with listening: listening to God, listening to each other, listening to ourselves, and listening to the world around us. Listening to God together through Dwelling in the Word and in the World helps us begin to name what God might be up to in our midst. Listening to stories about what we long for and what we've lost (or are afraid to lose) helps our hearts align with what God cares about most.

- Dwelling in the Word
- Listening to longings and losses
- Listening to the church community, neighbors and community leaders
- Spiritual Life Inventory for congregation



Reconnect

The way forward involves reconnecting with God's faithfulness, God's story, and God's promises to us as God's people. There is a distinctly Christian way to approach the future, by affirming God's leadership and God's abundance in our lives. The stories we tell ourselves must be shaped by God's stories and promises. We believe that God will show us the way forward and provide the resources needed to go there. We will continue to dwell in the world as God reconnects us with the neighborhood.

- Reconnecting with God's Story
- Chapter Exercise - Connecting our Story with God's Story (congregational)
- Reconnecting with the neighborhood
- Trusting God - naming where/how God might be asking us to trust to move forward
- "Kairos Circle" - Naming God's Leading in Everyday Life



Define

The way forward requires that we define the challenges we are facing in terms of God's agency in our lives. Many of the challenges we are facing are adaptive in nature—there are no easy answers, because we don't yet know how to address them and they require us to reflect on our assumptions and values. Leaders need to articulate the challenges congregations are facing in ways that invite others to learn by doing in order to discern God's movement and God's call to a new way forward.

- Moving from technical to adaptive challenge statements
- Trying action learning experiments
- Creating intentional feedback loops
- Participation analysis tool - How are people being formed now?



Reframe

The way forward requires that the church reframes expectations both of leaders and of members. Change requires that we understand current expectations, negotiate new expectations, and empower leaders to focus their time and energy differently than they have in the past. What do congregations currently expect their pastoral leaders to do? What does God expect from pastoral leaders and members if we are focused on faithful innovation and forming faith in the 21st century?

- Expectation analysis tool - what do congregations expect of their pastoral leaders? What do pastoral leaders think congregations expect of them? How do pastoral leaders think these expectations need to change if they are going to be empowered to lead into the future? Is there an "expectations gap?"
- Design thinking process (rather than starting with strategic planning)
- Recovery of Priesthood of all Believers
- Commissioning the work of adaptive leaders



Cultivate

The way forward involves whole congregations cultivating life together through spiritual practices and innovation focused on discerning God's presence and joining God's work. Some of these spiritual practices are not new, but ancient ways followers of Christ have experienced connection with God's Spirit. Alongside this there are practices of experimenting, prototyping, testing, and evaluating that allow congregations to cultivate faithful new expressions of ministry.

- Spiritual Exercises - Reflecting on God in daily life
- Designing and Engaging in action learning ministry experiments
- Risk Taking
- Discipleship
- Discerning Prayer
- Neighborhood engagement
- Spiritual conversations

What Do I Need to Bring to this Journey as a Pastor?

Approach to the Work

As a pastor participating in this journey, you need to be:

- **Ready** - Aware that existing models of ministry are breaking down and open to exploring new models for pastoral leadership and ministry.
- **Healthy** - Pastors have to be competent, healthy enough to participate in this journey, and collegial.
- **Eager to Learn** - Pastors need to be intelligent, able to ask deep questions about their leadership and their congregation, and must be open to change.
- **Credible** - Pastors must have enough trust built with the congregation that they are willing to go along on the journey.
- **Stable** - Pastors must not be in the process of moving congregations.
- **Able to Participate** - Pastors must be able to carve out the time in their schedules to participate fully.

Time Commitment

- This Pastor Learning Community will meet once per month online for 90 minutes. We will use Zoom to connect via video chat to share learning and support each other as we move through the process.
- We will gather for 3 retreats in October, January and April. These retreats will last 1-2 days.
- Pastors need to commit to engaging in the practices outlined by the process as a regular rhythm of their life.

Congregational Participation

Pastoral participation in this learning community assumes that the pastor is willing to recruit lay leaders from their congregation to join a congregational learning community that will begin in the fall of 2019. These congregational learning communities will help lay leaders engage the whole congregation in a version of the process described above. Pastors, in partnership with their coach and synod leaders, will help equip their congregation to move through these steps. The congregation will be expected to participate in the learning community for 2 years (2019-20 and 2020-21).

Cost

Pricing for LC Participation:

(All pricing discounted by Lilly Grant)

Pastor LC - ~~\$2,000/year~~ \$1,000/year for 3 years (\$3,000 total)

Congregation LC - ~~\$3,000/year~~ \$1,500/year for 2 years (\$3,000 total)

If cost is a concern for participation, contact your synod leader.

What if I Have Questions?

Contact the Point Person in your synod who invited you to consider being part of this journey. Your synod Point Person can also connect you with a member of Luther Seminary's grant team for further discussion.