

ENCORE MODULES



I Will Build My Church (Part 1): [Senkbeil] **Church and Ministry in essence**

“Thank God, even a seven-year-old child knows what the church is.” The Lutheran Confessions provide a clear and concise vision for the nature of the church and its mission (Smalcald Articles XII) hinging around the preached Word of Christ. Current views of the church and pastoral work, in contrast, seem to lean heavily on secular business and industry models. This module reviews essential definitions for the church and her ministry on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions, then explores the practical implications of these definitions for the relationship between pastors and laity in the contemporary church.

Pastors and Laity will:

- a. Gain deeper appreciation for the church as God’s own creation, created and nourished in Christ Jesus.
- b. Grasp more clearly the nature and work of the God-given Office of the Public Ministry.
- c. Explore the implications of the Lutheran doctrine of vocation and the priesthood of all believers for life in the church in the contemporary context.
- d. Review and evaluate alternate understandings of the church and her ministry.

I Will Build My Church (Part 2): [Senkbeil] **Church and Ministry in Mission**

“The Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer...” The catechism’s simple faith seems radical when compared to the massive amount of energy expended in support of the church’s mission in our time. Where is the fine line between such confident faith and lazy indifference? How do congregations set about their work in their local community, neglecting neither the flock already gathered around Word and Sacrament and those “other sheep” the Good Shepherd bled and died to save? Is the care of souls a myopic focus on church members, or does it also include outreach to unbelievers? This module applies our biblical and confessional understanding of the church and her ministry to outreach in light of the theological and cultural trends of our time.

Pastors and Laity will:

- a. Gain a fuller appreciation for the efficacious Word of the Gospel as the sole means by which the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies His Church on earth.
- b. Grasp more clearly the distinctive and complementary roles of both preachers and hearers in the outreach of the gospel.
- c. Evaluate some of the trends in contemporary media Christianity in light of Scripture and Confessions.
- d. Explore the impact of growing secularism and the contemporary world view among our unbelieving neighbors.
- e. Review some of the connections between Lutheran doctrine and historic practice in terms of outreach in the contemporary context.

Valid and Certain in Heaven Also: [Senkbeil] the cure of souls through individual Confession and Absolution

“Absolution, or the Power of the Keys, is an aid against sin and a consolation for a bad conscience; it is ordained by Christ in the Gospel (Matthew 16:19). Therefore, Confession and Absolution should by no means be abolished in the Church.” [Smalcald Articles, VIII (1)]
The conscientious use of Confession and Absolution is rare among contemporary evangelical Lutherans. Yet Luther himself regarded it as part of the ordinary care of souls. How should the pastor use this long-neglected pastoral gift in his ministry to the burdened souls under his care? This module reviews the theological foundation and practical use of the Keys in the contemporary context.

Pastors will:

- e. Review the biblical and confessional framework for the practice of Confession/Absolution (C/A).
- f. Explore the spiritual benefit of C/A in the Christian life.
- g. Examine the logistical aspects of teaching C/A and incorporating it into the normal life of the parish.
- h. Develop greater sensitivity toward the natural apprehensions of first-time penitents.
- i. Develop greater appreciation for the relational and experiential dimensions of C/A.
- j. Appraise their personal role as both confessor and penitent.

View from the Pew [Senkbeil]

In this module lay leaders will gain perspective on the challenges unique to their own congregations as they address challenges common among other congregations. Special attention is given to cultural change and how the church maintains an effective biblical witness and mission in our time.

Lay Leaders will:

- a. Identify common areas of concern among the members of their congregation.
- b. Learn how other congregations address those concerns.
- c. Review the impact of shifting world views on the Christian life and mission.
- d. Explore faithful ways to respond to and engage the contemporary culture.

The Care and Feeding of Pastors [Senkbeil] a multi-dimensional model for the support of pastors and their families

This module looks at the mutual responsibilities of pastors and congregations, reviews potential hazards impacting pastoral life and work, and then explores practical ways that congregation leaders can foster the best possible working environment for their pastor.

Lay Leaders will:

- a. Review the Scriptural and Confessional (Small Catechism) duties of preachers and hearers.
- b. Examine common vocational hazards among pastors and congregations.
- c. Explore ways to remedy potential hazards and create positive atmosphere of trust and support for the pastoral office within the congregation

The Gathering in Retrospect [Senkbeil]

It's only been a few months since we last "gathered" – were you really ready for the Encore? To be precise, what will it take to build on your past and present learning experiences? What do you want to take home with you this time? How can you best implement some of the skills and perspectives we've explored together in your daily ministry?

Pastors will:

- a. Review some of the highlights of the Gathering curriculum.

- b. Sharpen their perception of and perspective on the Encore.
- c. Identify goals they would like to renew or update for their daily ministry.
- d. Clarify the role of brother pastors in assisting them spiritually and professionally.
- e. Help shape DOXOLOGY's impact on pastors and the congregations they serve.

Healthy Relationships with Difficult Souls [Yahnke]

Christians who want to serve their Lord in His church may find that not everyone shares their opinion and perspective about matters important to them. This module explores the reality that even well-intentioned souls can collide unhappily in the service of the church. The presentation points to insights regarding what underlies and perpetuates the behavior of difficult souls. Choices about personal response styles are surveyed and strategies that may move individuals beyond hurt to hope and from paralysis to possibility for both spiritual and interpersonal renewal are offered.

Pastors and lay leaders will:

- a. Review Biblical roots, guidelines and realities informing our relationships with others
- b. Examine models that are often used to bring about change in the behavior of a difficult soul
- c. Be encouraged to adopt a compassionate view of the other.
- c. Review habitual response styles to difficult souls
- d. Consider strategies that move difficult souls beyond relationship paralysis to hope

Life in the Stained Glass Fishbowl [Yahnke]

Pastors and their families lead a very public, a very observed and a very commented upon life. Lay leaders often see their pastors functioning in very specific roles as preacher, teacher, meeting facilitator and spiritual care provider. Lay leaders rarely have an opportunity to peek beyond the public presentation of their pastor. This module provides an excellent overview of research that the church has acquired regarding the very special challenges borne by her pastors and pastors' families.

Lay Leaders will:

- A. Become acquainted with the numerous churchly stressors well known by pastors and their wives
- B. Examine the impact of the ministry upon the quality of the lives of pastors' wives and children
- C. Review current research describing areas of particular personal/professional vulnerability for LCMS pastors.
- D. Consider the primary issues that contribute to pastoral challenges
- E. Determine what recommendations they may want to take home to their parish for discussion.

Pastoral Depletion Hazards [Yahnke]

Pastors are accustomed to giving sacrificially of their time, love and energy. This module examines the necessity for pastoral self-care in light of research findings about the diminished health, well-being and capacity of “people who love too much.”

Lay leaders will:

- A. Become acquainted with the threats of compassion fatigue
- B. Explore to what extent, if at all, pastors are challenged by work-related stressors
- C. Become familiar with signs and symptoms of burnout
- D. Examine the impact that work environment may have on pastoral well-being
- E. Review coping strategies essential for response to major stressors
- F. Determine which resiliency-building options may be useful for pastoral well-being

Caring for Brother Pastors: Traditional Care and Crisis Care (A Reprise of the Template for Attentive, Intentional Pastoral Work) [Yahnke]

Case studies are routinely regarded as the very best way of moving from theory to application. In this module, pastors will be invited to examine their responsibility to care for brother pastors. They will also be challenged to review the tools of spiritual diagnosis and ethical problem-solving. Final group discussion will allow an opportunity to discern that very often there are multiple and reasonable approaches available in service of their brothers' needs.

Pastors will:

- A. Discuss the difficulties inherent in asking for help and receiving help from a brother pastor.
- B. Examine the responsibility and opportunity that pastors have to care for brother pastors.
- C. Explore a case study from the perspectives of spiritual diagnosis, while integrating sensitivity to emotional needs and determining a pastor's ethical responsibilities.
- D. Determine that one's first inclinations about pastoral responses to difficult pastoral situations can often be enhanced by consultation with a brother.

Mutual Encouragement: Bridging the Gap [Yahnke/Senkbeil]

Pastors and lay leaders always benefit from an opportunity to exchange perspectives. This module allows for meaningful conversation among pastors and lay leaders regarding ongoing matters of importance to all those who serve in the church. Whether one is called and ordained, or whether one is an elected leader or valuable volunteer, mutual encouragement, support and lively sharing between pastor and people invite new insights, renewal and the opportunity to learn from those outside of one's own parish.

Pastors and lay leaders will:

- A. Identify some of the challenges they face as they endeavor to serve in their congregation.
- B. Talk with a small group of other pastors and lay leaders about how other churches address similar challenges.
- C. Exchange perspectives about how their congregations deal with discontent and criticism.
- D. Identify a source of frustration that could be alleviated if only pastors or lay leaders would be willing to make some minor changes.

Suicide: Detection, Prevention and Responses [Yahnke]

This module will examine the extremely challenging pastoral care approaches to individuals who are having suicidal ideation. It will assist pastors to detect signs and symptoms that merit immediate referral. It will also increase pastoral confidence in responding to people who have found comfort in embracing the myths of suicide. Finally the module will point to matters of pastoral sensitivity and advocacy as one may need to provide care for survivors of a suicide.

Pastors will:

- A. Understand the stunning prevalence of suicidal ideation and behavior
- B. Become familiar with strategies to identify dangerousness
- C. Review important pastoral responses to individuals who are at risk
- D. Examine and confront the myths that often surround suicidal thinking
- E. Consider the needs of and pastoral responses to the survivors in the event of a suicide