



The Two Schools of the Institute of Lutheran Theology

By Pastor Tom Walker, ILT Dean of Administration

The Institute of Lutheran Theology will kick off two programs in pastoral training next fall. These two programs, The Masters of Divinity degree and the Rapid Pastoral Certification, not only define our future but also demonstrate the nature of a crucial structural element called "Two Schools."

The Institute of Lutheran Theology was given a broad spectrum of responsibility by its founders. Its purpose is not just to produce pastoral candidates with Master of Divinity degrees like other seminaries. The church's need presents a new challenge where different configurations of lay and clergy lead the church together in creative ways. The ILT is developing a spectrum of curricular programs that are designed to be building blocks which congregations can use to train the leaders they need.

In order to present these programs in ways that can be recognized by today's accreditation agencies, the Institute is organized into two schools, the Academy and the Graduate Program. The Academy manages general lay education and ILT leadership certification programs. The Graduate School is the home for the degree bearing programs of the ILT such as the Master of Divinity degree.

Next fall the Academy offers its flagship program which is called Rapid Pastoral Certification. This program is designed to quickly prepare a candidate with the basic skills needed to provide pastoral leadership in a congregation. By the end of the first three courses, a student in this program will be able to preach, teach, and lead a congregation. Over the next three terms the candidate completes the remaining nine courses that round out the full certification. This program is designed to rush support to congregations trying to exist without pastoral leadership by training an existing member of the congregation to step into that key role.

The Graduate school also begins its work next fall by offering a Master of Divinity degree. Because the ILT cannot begin the accreditation process until it actually has graduates, the first recipients will receive unaccredited degrees. However, care is being taken to provide accredited coursework through partner institutions. The Institute will be seeking full accreditation for its degrees as soon as it has graduates. The ILT Master of Divinity program features two years of concentrated course work followed by a two-year residency where the remaining courses are finished on the job.

Together the two schools of the ILT present flexibility and options for students and congregations for developing the leaders they need to get the job done. We are looking for candidates to apply for these programs right now. If you are interested in application or just learning more about them, please call **605-692-9337** or email: admin@instituteoflutherantheology.org.