



Thoughts from Students of the School for Lay Ministry

Enlighten Discipleship

As we met for the first time in the fall of 2005 we were all asking ourselves....why? Why are we here?? What did we hope to gain??? Where are we heading???? Through our journey we have learned more about our rich history, from where our roots as Methodists began through to these post-modern times. John Wesley's tradition of using lay leaders to evangelize, including church leadership, care and outreach, and preaching the word of the Lord was all part of our educational experience. Not only did we learn about our Wesleyan traditions, we also explored other denominations in the Sioux City area including a Jewish Synagogue, a Greek Orthodox Church and a Carmelite Convent. We were also introduced to the area's Hispanic Missions. Thanks to the Connectional System of The United Methodist Church, we were supplied with top-of-the-line Professors and Instructors. Not to mention our wonderful Dean, Sue Mullins! Our course of study ranged from Theology, Church History, Preaching, Worship, Missions & Social Concerns, Evangelism, Doctrine and Polity, Christian Education to Leadership and Administration. Our three-year experience has fed us spiritually and intellectually.

So, why did we end up at the School for Lay Ministry? We answered God's call on our lives to be more effective disciples within our churches, districts, conferences and the world.

What did we gain? We gained the ability to begin fulfilling our call.

And where are we heading? Wherever God leads us, we are offering ourselves for His service. Our class met during our last meal together wanting to inform not only our churches of what we have accomplished, but also to bring a clearer understanding as to ways any Lay Person can find and use their spiritual gifts in God's service. We encourage everyone that feels God's gentle tug to pursue avenues in which you may grow and sow in His Amazing Love. - Kristin Boysen, Roxanne Boverhuis, Kimberly Cooper, David Decker, Kim Dewey, Jan Popp, Joe Scherrer, John Tomkins, Carolyn Wade and Deanna Wall, Morningside Class of 2008

You're Never Too Old!

I am a 2006 graduate of the School for Lay Ministry. I signed up to attend in response to the stated goals of our Bishop in 2002 that by 2008 each church in the Conference would have at least one graduate of the School for Lay Ministry. I believed that this goal was one of great stretch, but after my experience in the School I can definitely see why the Bishop framed this goal. My experience at the SLM was so spiritual and informing that I want to make sure everyone I know has the opportunity to learn more about it to determine if it might be for them. I entered the School at age 73. You are never too old to gain mightily from it. - Richard Sperring, Simpson Class of 2006

SLM is a Popular Choice

In 2004 my Pastor approached me about attending the School for Lay Ministry at Simpson College. My first thought when taking this project on was “Wow, I don't think I want to change my career at this time to be a part time pastor.” But I was excited about the knowledge I could gain being taught by other pastors and professional people from the Conference.

Here are three things one needs to consider if contemplating enrolling in the SLM: this is a personal decision by each and every person based on what's going on in their life at this time; this is just another part of our journey with Christ; and the knowledge you get not only from the books you read but the personal experiences from the clergy and Conference personnel is invaluable.

And then there's your class mates who you get to know and bond together with. You will never forget them because of the friendships you build.

Yes, this was a program created to have part-time pastors, but I guarantee that you are going to come away with much more than just going to another bible study. This is a study of how to bring your life closer to God. - Todd Treese, Simpson Class of 2007

SLM takes People even Deeper into Christianity

I take my membership vows to The United Methodist Church very seriously. As part of my commitment to those vows, I became part of Bishop Palmer's vision for every UMC to have a member of the congregation trained in leadership by taking advantage of the wonderful education opportunity provided by the Iowa Conference.

I am a 2007 graduate of the Iowa School for Lay Ministry, Simpson Campus. I would like to take full credit for my choice to attend the program but in all honesty it was God who led me there, God who kept me there and God who now leads me through the wonderful opportunities that are before me.

The Iowa School for Lay Ministry provides so much more than a great opportunity to become a leader within your own congregation. It was my intent to attend the School to make new friends, grow in the Spirit and have a better understanding of the UMC. All of these expectations were met and surpassed by the quality of the instructors, the curriculum and the love and support of my classmates. The spiritual bonds forged will forever be a network of support.

The skills and confidence I gained by participating in the program have allowed me to do things I would not have had the courage to try on my own. I will long remember this as a time of intense spiritual growth, another step in my walk with God. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you.” May His plans for you lead you to one of the campus experiences of the School for Lay Ministry. - Dott Gersema, Simpson Class of 2007

God's Way of Awakening the Soul: What I feel the School for Lay Ministry did for me

This great School gave God the chance to awaken my soul and call me to action. When you attend this School, you are in for the most spirit filled time of your life. You will meet other Disciples of Christ that are following the journey that we have been called to. In the School, you will meet instructors that will awaken, challenge and help you to grow in areas that will make you better able to understand the mission of a lay person.

All of the classes have a great value in helping you understand the workings of Christ and the United Methodist Church. The student starts out the first session with a process to discern why you are there and what your true call is. I attended the first session not having a clue what I was being called to do but knew that Christ was calling me to do something more than I was doing presently. During the session, the instructors tried to help us by giving us some tools to figure out the call on our lives. When it came time for us to tell what we felt we had been called to do, I still did not know what that was for me. The instructor came and talked with me for a while and made it clear that it was okay not to be completely sure of the call at that point and time as long as I knew I was being called to do something more for Christ.

As I continued on with the classes, my call became clearer and I found out what God was calling me to do. We all need to remember that all things happen in God's time and He will reveal what we need to know. I promise you that this education was the best thing that has happened in my faith journey. I made friends in the class that have helped me through the good and the bad times. I know that all I would have to do is say the word and they would be there for me any time I needed them. I would tell anyone who is not sure what they want to do for Christ but know they are being called to a higher level of service that this School will put you on the right track.

The one thing I would like to leave you with is this: When I started I was unsure if this was for me. When the first session was over I could not wait for the next, not only to be back for the teaching but to be with my new sojourners. At the end of the three years I was very sad that it was over and knew there would be a void in my life. Our class is very close and many of us stay in touch through e-mail and phone calls.

Please take the time and listen to God and attend the School for Lay Ministry. You will be happy you did and will not believe the blessings you will receive. I pray that God will speak to your heart and that you will listen and follow Him.

God's Blessings - Bill Deskin, Simpson Class of 2007