

## ***A ROAD MAP TO NAVIGATE UTICA PRESBYTERY'S LAY ACADEMY***

### **DECIDING TO TRAVEL**

#### *Step One- Sensing a Call*

Perhaps you have been serving as an elder on and off for years, and have taught countless Sunday School classes, and you find that the more you do in service of God through the church the more energy you have. Are you hungering for more Bible Study? . Do you, or others feel you have a gift for preaching? Whatever tug or pull your feeling, whatever voice you're hearing, if you're sensing a call, it may be wise for you to **check out the Lay Academy. If you're uncertain about whether or not you're being called, you might want to participate in an exploratory interview on one of the Lay Academy Inquiry Days (see step four) before you do anything else.**

#### *Step Two- Sharing your Sense of Call*

Let your pastor, or the moderator of your Session, know that you have this sense of call and that you'd like to explore participation in the Lay Academy. Inquire whether your Pastor/ Moderator would be willing to support you in pursuit of a calling to Lay Ministry. If you do have the support of your Pastor/Moderator, ask your Pastor/Moderator for a Lay Academy application. If your Pastor or Moderator does not have a copy of the Lay Academy application, have him/her contact the presbytery office to request one.

### **PREPARING TO TRAVEL**

#### *Step Three- Completing your Application*

Please do not view the application as a hoop to jump through, but rather see it as an aid to your discernment. Take time to prayerfully complete the application, putting thought into your essays and developing a statement of faith. Once your work on the application is complete, meet with your Church Session and receive their endorsement. Once the clerk of Session has filled out the Session Endorsement Form (s)he should submit one copy to the clerk of the presbytery and one copy to each of to the co-deans of the Academy.

#### *Step Four- Participating in an Exploratory Interview*

Lay Academy Inquiry Day will be held in the Spring. At Inquiry Day, the Lay Academy Steering Committee will meet with those interested in exploring a call to Lay Ministry. Either those who have already completed an application or those just beginning a tentative consideration of the possibility of being trained for Lay Ministry can schedule an interview with the steering committee for the purpose of exploring their sense of call and identifying next steps. If one has not completed an application before participating in this interview, but comes away feeling called, one should step back to step three before going forward.

### **HITTING THE ROAD**

#### *Step Five- Pursing a Mentor Relationship*

Once one has completed the exploratory interview and application and the candidate and steering committee believe that they are ready to move forward, a mentor will be assigned to the candidate. Candidates must meet with their mentors at least once a year to review progress, but can meet as frequently as once a month. The mentor will keep the steering committee apprised of their

candidate's progress.

*Step Six- Participating in Training Events and Courses*

One might have the desire to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor, or one might want to serve as a lay preacher in the presbytery, filling vacant pulpits as needed, or one might simply want to become a more effective elder or deacon in one's home congregation, whatever the sense of call, training through the Lay Academy can be helpful to you.

In order to be authorized as a lay preacher or commissioned as a Lay Pastor you must complete course work in the following:

Old Testament (biblical interpretation with an eye to preaching and teaching)  
New Testament (biblical interpretation with an eye to preaching and teaching)  
Reformed Theology (theological formation with an eye to preaching and teaching)  
Worship and Sacraments (with special attention to the centrality of preaching)  
Presbyterian Polity

(PLEASE NOTE- completion of this training does not guarantee authorization or commissioning.)

Other occasional courses will be offered by the Lay Academy for the continuing education of Lay Ministers in our presbytery as well as for supplemental education, if desired, for those in training.

*Step Seven- Evaluation by the Lay Academy Steering Committee*

Once all the required training has been completed, those desiring authorization as a lay preacher will lead a worship service in which one or more representatives from the Lay Academy is in attendance for the purposes of evaluation and will participate in an evaluative interview with the whole steering committee who will assess the candidate's knowledge in basic Bible content, Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, and Presbyterian Polity.

Assuming a positive evaluation of the candidate's worship leadership, and a satisfactory completion of this oral examination, the candidate's will be authorized as lay preachers by the Committee on Ministry. Those authorized could now be eligible to be Commissioned as Lay Pastors if an appropriate call arises. If there are deficiencies in any areas, additional steps for training will be identified and brought to the attention of the candidate and mentor for completion before any authorization.

**CONTINUING THE JOURNEY**

*Step Eight- Participating in Continuing Education*

It is always appropriate and faithful for one to participate in courses offered by the Lay Academy even if one is already authorized or commissioned. Be sure to let the Lay Academy Steering Committee know what classes would be particularly helpful to you for your continuing education.