

The School for Ministry: A New Program for Laity

The School for Ministry is a new joint venture for the Illinois Conference and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin (CCWI)! It will begin in 2019 as a school for those seeking licensed ministry in the UCC and will also welcome those seeking more education as a lay person. In today's changing landscape in our local churches, there is often the need for different kinds of pastoral leadership to assist our churches to thrive.



What will it look like?

Students will be part of a group called a cohort. The first experience for each cohort will be a weekend spiritual retreat. The focus of the retreat will be discerning a call to ministry. There will be a scriptural study of call – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, the disciples. There will be opportunities to practice deep listening and to engage in Circles of Trust (ala Parker Palmer), a version of a Quaker clearness committee.

Courses in the first year will likely include Basic Bible – origins, meaning, the Canon, interpretation – Hebrew Scriptures in the winter/spring session and New Testament in the fall session. These courses will be offered online. The summer intensive will likely include a week-long in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible such as Ezekiel, the Gospel of John, the Psalms. We would like the intensive courses to be open to everyone – clergy and laity – led by some of the most gifted seminary professors today. During that week, there will be additional opportunities for the School's first cohort to continue deepening their spiritual journey together.

They will journey through the three-year process together as they take classes online in the spring and fall, gather for the intensive classes each summer and have the support of a mentor, a spiritual director and a life coach.

Through these experiences, we will help rural congregations and other small congregations in need of pastoral leadership. We will emphasize the raising up of leaders from within our congregations, recognizing the gifts of the laity.

A gifted and passionate Board is leading this start-up ministry. Please pray for this great group of servants as this new ministry is being formed. These are exciting times! Keep your eyes open for more information! Currently staff support is being provided by Tom Norwalk, Kathy Lawes and Jim Olson.

AND, we are now seeking a part-time Executive Director. [Click here for the position description.](#)