



Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry (PAM), formerly Lay Ministry in the 21st Century, was originally designed as a program of education for lay persons to be equipped and empowered for discipleship within the life of local congregations and in daily living. Begun in 1995 this program was developed and sponsored by the Tri-Penn Conferences of the United Church of Christ - Penn Central Conference (PCC), Penn Northeast Conference (PNEC), and Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC). As time marched on Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry became known as the Licensed/Commissioned Ministry education preparation program.

A new curriculum was developed that fits faithfully within the MARKS of Effective Ministry and one that is more streamlined for efficient completion of the Licensed/Commissioned requirements. In addition, Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry is assisting our Tri-Penn Conference sponsors by providing new classes designed to help the local churches prepare, empower and equip leaders and laity from their congregations work together to bring about a long and prosperous future for their church and the church universal.

Our new website allows registration, payment, retrieval of class documents and even a forum for student to work together and alumni to keep in touch. Our Saturday schedule for both basic and advanced classes as well as our LIVE BROADCAST and recording of the classes has provided the flexibility and accommodations that were needed for our students to complete their studies without negatively impacting their family, church and work schedules. Even with a new curriculum, flexible technology, convenient scheduling and expanded courses, this past year has been a major challenge.

Due to the recent discussions and changes in the Manual on Ministry for a single path to Authorization our class size reduced to an all time low. The Penn Northeast Conference had seven students during the 2016/2017 school year with Pennsylvania Southeast and Penn Central Conferences having four students each, resulting in almost a 65% decrease in enrollment. Many of our current and past students are unsure of their futures in Licensed Ministry due to rumors about its' demise and several current students have suspended their studies. Therefore, PAM joined with Lancaster Theological Seminary to study and determine if the two programs could be integrated for the benefit of students seeking Authorized Ministry.

These discussions have led to a grant being obtained by Lancaster Theological Seminary from the Association of Theological Schools to do just that. A working group comprised of stakeholders from both organizations and all three conferences developed a survey that has been sent out to clergy, laity, alumni, Committees on Ministry (COM) and Member in Discernment (MID) committees. The results will be compiled to allow the development of a plan to integrate the two programs. A final decision and plan should be presented by May of 2018. Our hope is that the new program that emerges from this integration will address the needs of students and Association's COM or MID committees so to continue providing qualified and competent Ministry candidates for whatever path an Association chooses for Authorization.

For more information on Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry, contact our Program Director, Rev. Steven C. Hummel, at 324 Center St., Bloomsburg, PA 17815 or call 484-239-5578 or email paacademyofministry@gmail.com. Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry is eternally grateful for all the support it receives from PNEC, PSEC, and PCC of the United Church of Christ.