

Life of Faith Holy Innovations Project

To borrow Luther's question:

What does this mean?



Why is this needed?

There is a gap between our faith and daily life. While we are very aware that we are called to be God's hands, feet, and voices in all of life, most often we limit faithful activity (ministry) to that which happens in and through our congregations. When we're "at church" we do churchy things; the rest of our lives are, well, "just life."

Because of this gap between faith and life, we see ministry as doing *something extra*, above and beyond what we normally do—if we have the time and the interest. This gap blinds us to the countless ways God is at work in our everyday lives as family members, friends, students, workers, volunteers, and citizens.

What is the goal?

This project is designed to close this gap by shifting **from** valuing and supporting *only* what we do in and through the congregation **to** affirming and equipping the baptized for all that God is doing for the sake of the neighbor in and through our daily lives. This is not a program; it is not a pet project for a small group; it is not in addition to (or in replacement of) what we are already doing. It is a matter of seeing and shaping all that the congregation does as a means of supporting and empowering all of us (pastors and deacons included!) to see the roles and relationships of our lives as ways God is working through us to provide "daily bread"¹ for our neighbors.²



How will it work?

The project spans three years. The first year (where we are right now) lays the groundwork for years two and three. First up is recruiting a Guiding Team (that's what you are being asked to consider) in each participating congregation. Guiding Teams will be trained and equipped. They will lead their congregation in developing a guiding vision for their particular context as well as goals and plans for years two and three. A coach will walk alongside each congregation throughout the process. Guiding Teams in each synod will meet together periodically as a cohort to share insights, struggles, ideas, and to celebrate what has been learned. Your synod's leaders are committed to accompanying you on this journey.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

continues...

¹ See the explanation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism.

² Watch the introductory video on the homepage of <http://lifeoffaith.info> for a look at how this shift has changed one congregation in Minnesota.

What is my role?

As a member of your congregation's Guiding Team, you will join your pastor(s) and four or five other members in several training sessions over the course of the first year. Your team will spend some time up front discerning your personal and corporate calls to ministry. You will be asked to do some reading. Your team will share the task of introducing and incorporating the project throughout your congregation's life. Your particular roles and responsibilities will be discerned as your Guiding Team makes plans for years two and three.

When will it happen?

The first training session will be held in person on June 9 & 10. Over the summer you will engage in some personal reflection, which will help your Guiding Team discern your congregation's particular approach. In the fall you will participate in a series of three online, in-depth training sessions. Between now and then your Guiding Team will make arrangements for the congregation to take a baseline survey. By the end of the year your Guiding Team will have developed a guiding theological/vision statement for your congregation's participation in the project, as well as initial plans for years two and three.

What resources will we have?

The Life of Faith Initiative has a website (<https://lifeoffaith.info>) that has a wide variety of resources for your use. There is a private Facebook page for you to share your journey with other congregations that are in the project as well. Your team will have a coach to guide you through the process. Cohort meetings in your synod will provide support and accountability. Your synod leaders stand ready to help you as appropriate. Life of Faith leaders will provide information and ideas as you shape plans for the years ahead. Assigned reading will provide additional resources.

What will we get out of this?

The promise is that congregations that close the gap between faith (at church) and life (in the world) will experience vitality and renewal. Stress will be lifted from leaders and members alike as we replace our usual requests to do *something extra* for the congregation with affirmation of and support for all that God is *already doing* in our everyday lives for the benefit of our neighbors.