

## **LEADERSHIP FOR VITAL CONGREGATIONS, VITAL COMMUNITIES**

Course: ML 409

Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Illinois

Fall 2020

Lead Instructor: The Rev. Dr. Ruben Duran, Director of Congregational Vitality, ELCA;  
([Ruben.Duran@elca.org](mailto:Ruben.Duran@elca.org)); Cell: 630-440-8591

Assistant Instructor: Dr. Kris Bjorke, Program Coordinator for Collaborative Ministries, ELCA  
([Kris.Bjorke@elca.org](mailto:Kris.Bjorke@elca.org)); Cell: 612-597-0048

Team of Guest Speakers: Collaborators from the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit

- Rev. Phil Hirsh, Executive Director, ELCA Domestic Mission
- Rev. Nancy Nyland, Director for Evangelical Mission, Indiana-Kentucky Synod
- Rev. Anna-Kari Johnson, Associate Director Congregational Vitality
- Mr. Keith Mundy, Director for Stewardship
- Rev. Albert Starr Jr., Director, Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries
- Rev. Brenda Smith, Program Director Faith and Book of Faith
- Mr. Steven Oelschlager, Coordinator, Stewardship Program

Course Objective: Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to “design a process for enhancing the vitality of a congregation and its surrounding community”.

Course Description: Participants will explore theological tools, evaluate leadership insights, analyze research results and integrate practical resources into the design of a vitalization process for a congregation of their choice. Participants will interact with each other, with churchwide staff, and local practitioners during each session.

Course Design: This class will meet “synchronously” via Zoom on 6 Friday sessions (9-Noon, 1-4pm CST). Additional content and interaction will be done with support from LSTC learning platform.

### **UNITS OF STUDY AND SCHEDULE**

September 11<sup>th</sup>: The Rev. Dr. Ruben Duran and weekly guests, Rev. Phil Hirsh, and Mr. Steve Oelschlager.

- Orientation to the Course and expectations
- ELCA Future Directions and Priorities
- Introduction to Congregational Vitality
- Praxis: One on One Relational Meetings

October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rev. Nancy Nyland

- Theological Foundations and Principles for Revitalization
- Designing and Implementing a Congregational Revitalization Process

October 16<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Anna-Kari Johnson, Dr. Kris BJORKE

- New Vital Congregations: Research and Insights
- Reading and Engaging the Context
- Leading, Equipping and Facilitating a Revitalization Process
- Collaboration and Innovation Strategies

November 6<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Albert Starr Jr.

- Cross-Cultural Competencies for Building Vital Congregations
- Growing Economically Diverse
- Reconciling in Christ Ministries

November 20<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Brenda Smith, Mr. Keith Mundy

- Faith Formation Strategies: Growing Young, Discipleship, Life of Faith
- Creating a Culture of Generosity
- Vital Congregations: Case Studies

December 4<sup>th</sup>: The Rev. Dr. Ruben Duran, Dr. Kris BJORKE

- Course Summary
- Presentation of Final Projects
- Closing Remarks

**PARTICIPANTS:** Seminary students will be graded Pass or Fail. Letter grade is possible if requested in writing before the second session. Auditors are welcome for a course fee. Some partial scholarships are available.