



## Exciting Changes to Lay Academy

by *Tisha Brown*

In my two years as Lay Academy Director, I have had an inside look at the many ways Lay Academy supports faith growth and leadership development throughout our conference and beyond. It is a privilege to witness people being turned on by faith and having a positive impact on their congregations and communities. The passion, enthusiasm, and faithfulness of Lay Academy participants is an inspiration and a beautiful outcome of the Wisconsin Conference Mission to "equip leaders and congregations to transform lives through innovative ministry for the 21st century."

Because I have seen what is possible through Lay Academy and because I know that there are many people and congregations who might benefit from this program but who are unable to commit the time and resources to a full year of courses we are experimenting this year with offering an à la carte option for Year 3 of Lay Academy - Lay Leadership Skills.

### **Lay Leadership Skills À La Carte**

Starting this fall, anyone who is interested, whether they've attended Lay Academy before or not, is invited to attend one or more Lay Leadership Skills à la carte sessions. The primary goal of Lay Leadership Skills is to equip participants to be spiritually grounded, faithful and effective leaders in local congregations and in their wider communities. Individuals who participate in one or more sessions of Lay Leadership Skills - Year 3 of Lay Academy will:

- Grow in understanding of their particular strengths and challenges as leaders
- Develop concrete tools and skills for effective leadership in their congregations and wider communities
- Enrich, encourage and support the life of the local congregation in cooperation with their Pastor and other leaders in the church
- Use newly acquired leadership skills, tools and self-understanding to impact their congregations and the wider community

Those who might want to consider attending these sessions would be anyone with a leadership position, such as Moderators or Council Presidents, chairs of committees, faith formation

leaders and leaders of congregation and community based initiatives. Pastors and leadership teams may want to consider attending one or more sessions together as a team. The schedule of sessions and [more information on this exciting opportunity is available here.](#)

**New! For Lay Academy Alumni!!**

In addition to the above expansion for Lay Leadership Skills, we are also inviting anyone who has completed at least two years of Lay Academy to return for any of the classes being offered in any given year. The alumni cost for individual sessions is \$25 per session which includes lunch on Saturday. Alumni will need to purchase their own books and make their own hotel reservations if needed. [For more details and to sign up for one or more sessions click here.](#)

These are incredible times to be God's people in the Wisconsin Conference. They are exciting times for Lay Academy and for every congregation whose ministry is touched and enhanced in some way by this program. I am confident that as we increase accessibility for Lay Academy and as we continue to find ways to build upon its strength and success we will get closer and closer to the Wisconsin Conference Vision that "By 2019 the people of the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin will be energized to be the church in their local context, expressed through passionate work toward a more just and generous world."

I hope to see YOU in Lay Academy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tisha".

Tisha