Dear Friends considering the Lay Preacher Formation Program:

Welcome to a journey of faith and hope! Thank you for your interest in discerning a possible call to serve as a Licensed Lay Preacher in the Diocese of Central New York. I am grateful you have responded to a sense of call and to engage in this process that allows us to explore God’s ongoing work in our midst.

In our worship, preaching is a moment of proclamation and of invitation to draw closer to God’s love. Each time I preach I am humbled by the privilege of engaging with the text and offering a word of hope to those present. Whatever has drawn you to explore this call to service, I give thanks for your faithfulness in responding.

In this process of discernment it is important to remember that a calling to preach is also a calling to prayer and to study. I encourage you to spend time in prayer and in reading scripture. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.” I pray you will rest in hope, knowing God is at work within you, and that your diocesan family is supporting you in this process.

Blessings of peace and hope for the journey,

+Bishop DeDe

*NOTE: The deadline for application submission is Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021.*

**Licensed Lay Preacher Course**

**Episcopal Diocese of Central New York**

**Summary**

The Diocese of Central New York seeks qualified applicants for our Lay Preaching program, a two-year course of reading, writing, preaching, and attending classes in preparation for certification (at the Bishop’s discretion) as a Licensed Lay Preacher. We are looking for people who are comfortable speaking in public, thoughtful about their spirituality, prayerful, and active in an Episcopal congregation. Participants should be organized and motivated to direct their own learning as much of the work is done on one’s own, with written communication with the Director.

**About the Lay Preaching Course**

The Lay Preaching Course is two years long and provides participants with opportunities to study, discuss, and practice preaching. There will be four Saturday **classes** each year. Each class includes a didactic session, a time for participants to preach, a worship service with preaching, and a master class with an experienced, gifted preacher. Students in their first and second years of the program attend class together – material and master preachers are new to all at each class.

Each participant will be assigned a **preaching mentor** from the wider diocese and will **preach four times** a year during public worship under that person’s supervision. The mentor will work closely with the lay preacher candidate as the sermon is prepared and will offer feedback after the sermon is given.

The course includes a substantial amount of **reading and writing**. Over the two-year program, participants will submit a written response to a book on preaching every month and write a series of reflections on their beliefs about various aspects of theology.

The course also depends on **personal spiritual practices** and assumes participants will **regularly attend Episcopal worship**. Participants will follow the weekly lectionary texts, read and listen to sermons, and write reflections.

**Tuition**

The course fee is $150 per year, payable to the Diocese of Central New York. Participants will also be responsible for acquiring their own materials and books.

**Course Dates**

It is expected that participants will attend all four Saturday classes each year and fully engage in assignments and activities. Before making application, the following class dates should be reviewed for availability:

 **2021: October 2, November 6**

 **2022: February 12, May 7**

**Application**

The required materials include a basic application form, a written essay, and two letters of recommendation, one clergy and one lay. Reference forms are attached.

Participant materials (application plus essay) and reference letters must be submitted **no later than Wednesday, Aug. 4.**

All material must be submitted **by email** to Kathy Dengler kdengler@cnyepiscopal.org and Rev. John Rohde jwrohde62@gmail.com - T**he email subject line should read, “Lay Preaching Application” followed by the applicant’s surname.**

Applications submitted after the stated deadline will not be considered.

There will also be a time of prayer and discernment for all applicants on Wed. Aug. 26 from 6-9 pm. Location (and/or Zoom) to be announced.

**Acceptance Decisions**

Decision notifications will be emailed to each participant with a copy to the recommending clergyperson. Decisions will be made and applicants notified by a date to be determined in early September. Students who had interrupted studies due to the pandemic and wish to continue will have the right of first refusal regarding acceptance.

**Questions**

Questions can be emailed to the Rev. John Rohde at jwrohde62@gmail.com

**Application for Lay Preaching Program**

**Submit electronically with letters of recommendation and essay by August 4, 2021 to** kdengler@cnyepiscopal.org and jwrohde62@gmail.com

**Email subject title should read “Lay Preaching Application/(your surname)”**

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**References**

Please provide two references from:

1. Your parish priest

Note: If your parish is currently without a priest, choose an Episcopal clergyperson who knows you well enough to recommend you.

2. A lay person who knows you through your parish or the wider church

Reference forms are attached.

**The subject heading for all emailed application forms should be titled “Lay Preaching Program/(your surname)”.**

**Required Essay**

Please write a 3-5 page essay about your spiritual journey.

The following prompts are not required, but may be helpful as you contemplate your written story:

* Your history of experiences with religious tradition(s)
* Beliefs and/or practices that have remained constant or changed over the years
* Your experience of relationship with God (including times of experienced closeness or distance)
* People who have impacted your spiritual journey (positively or otherwise)
* Ministries in which you have engaged that have been meaningful for you
* Why you believe you may be called as a licensed lay preacher
* Experiences, persons, reading, etc., that have inspired your faith
* Challenges to your faith, practice, or institutional trust
* How and where you experience the holy in everyday life and relationships
* What it means to be a “spiritual person” in this time and place

**Lay Preacher Reference: Clergy Form**

**Submit electronically to the applicant prior to August 4, 2021.**

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Please write a reference letter no longer than 2 pages in length which includes (but is not limited to) your impressions of the following:

* How well you know the applicant, for how long, and in what context(s).
* The applicant’s depth and quality of personal and theological reflection.
* The applicant’s degree of self-motivation, follow-through, self-direction and diligence.
* The applicant’s capacity for and manner of communication, written and oral, including the use of shared language and experience.
* Characteristics, including “intangibles” which lead you to recommend this person as a potential licensed preacher of the Gospel.

*If you have any further questions or comments, please be in touch with the Rev. John Rohde – jwrohde62@gmail.com or 315-391-3821.*

**Lay Preacher Reference: Lay Recommender Form**

**Submit electronically to the applicant prior to August 4, 2021.**

Applicant Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Please write a reference letter no longer than 2 pages in length which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

* How well you know the applicant, for how long, and in what context(s).
* Your reasons for believing this person would make an effective and faithful licensed preacher of the Gospel. Please include your impressions and give examples of the applicant in terms of the following:

Reliability; willingness to take responsibility; consistency and follow-through

Effectiveness as a communicator, public speaker, writer (if applicable)

 Role and quality of presence within the life of the parish

 Anything else, including “intangibles” which you would like to mention

*If you have any further questions or comments, please be in touch with the Rev. John Rohde – jwrohde62@gmail.com or 315-391-3821.*