



Certified Lay Minister Course 2026

Resourcing & Homework

Assignments are subject to change – you will be notified ASAP if anything changes.

Welcome Evening and Breakthrough Preaching Format

Prior to Tuesday, January 27th meeting on Zoom:

- Review The Breakthrough Worship Series called "[I See You](#)"
 - Pay careful attention to the "I See You Preaching Resource", which is available in Word and PDF format on the above link
- Review a sample sermon outline found in the [2020 Breakthrough Guide](#) on page 19
- Bring a Sunday morning worship bulletin
- Purchase a 2020/2024 Book of Discipline if you do not already have access to a copy
- Speak to your pastor about the possibilities of making a pastoral call or visit by April 20th

Preaching Instruction

Following the Saturday, February 7th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center:

By February 20th: Submit sermon and bulletin to Megan McKay via email at mmckay@epagnj.org

- Sermon Instructions:
 - Title your document "Sermon by *First and Last Name. Sermon Title*"
 - Manuscript should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double spaced with your name on each page.
 - The sermon should be a 10-15 minute original sermon that you are prepared to preach on in class on February 28th based on ONE of the identified scriptures from the *Breakthrough* series "I See You".
 - Consider using the preaching feedback form to receive feedback on your sermon from someone before submission. The form will help guide our preaching sermon feedback session on March 1st.
- Bulletin Instructions
 - Please create a Worship Bulletin based on your Scripture and Sermon
 - Please title your document "Bulletin by *First and Last Name*"
 - Basic patterns for worship can be found in the United Methodist Hymnal pages 2-5
 - Feel free to use bulletins from your church as a reference

Module 1: What does worship look like? Why are you called to be a CLM?

Module 2: Practice of Ministry and Leadership Styles

Prior to Tuesday, February 24th meeting on Zoom:

- Read Module 1: pages 1-9, 14-16
- Watching the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IxUXQjHVEQ>
- Complete the [Spiritual Gifts Survey](#)
- Read Module 2: pages 1-38, 83-117
- Bring a draft of your March 1st sermon to this meeting for sharing and discussion

Preaching the Sermon and Breakthrough Small Groups

Prior to Saturday, February 28th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center

- Prior to class, review [Breakthrough "I See You" Small Group Resources](#)
- Bring a copy of your sermon and bulletin to class to be ready to preach

Module 3: Organization for Ministry

Prior to Tuesday, March 10th meeting on Zoom

- Read Module 3: pages 1-38

Congregational Care & Funerals and Finance, Shared Ministry, & Stewardship

Prior to Saturday, March 14th meeting in person at the Mission and Resource Center

Congregational Care and Funerals

- Review [Right Listening by Mark Brady](#). Select at least one of the practices that will impact your listening skills. Use that practice for at least one week before class. Make note of the impact the practice has on your listening skills
- Review in the UMC Book of Worship: Services of Death and Resurrection, pages 139-169
- Review the [sample of a Funeral Sermon](#)
- By April 15th: Funeral Sermon Assignment:
 - Select an obituary of someone that you do not know. Write a funeral sermon based on the obituary. Include the printed obituary and scripture before the sermon.
 - Sermons should be double-spaced in 12-point font of Times New Roman. Make sure your first and last name is on each page. Submit the sermon in a file titled "Your Name_Funeral Sermon" to Megan McKay (mmckay@epagnj.org) by April 15th.
 - This is a written assignment, meaning the sermon will not be preached in class.

Finance, Shared Ministry, & Stewardship

- Review [this link](#) and read the job descriptions of the following leadership positions: Finance Chairperson, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary
- Peruse the following links:
 - [The Lewis Center for Church Leadership](#)
 - [Horizons](#), please sign up for Giving365
 - [Discipleship Ministries](#)
- Read the article ["The Spirituality of Fundraising"](#)
- Bring a copy of your 2026 Church Budget

Mock Interviews & Breakthrough Best Practices

Prior to Tuesday, April 14th meeting on Zoom

- Review GNJ "Breakthrough Growing Churches Do This Handout"
- Ensure modules 1-3 have been read
- Read Module 4 and suggested reading
 - Suggested additional reading for polity: ["Our Method and Our Mission"](#)

Sacraments & CLM Process Next Steps

Prior to Saturday, April 18th meeting in person at the Mission & Resource Center

Please bring a Book of Worship to class

- Read about the Three Types of Grace: [A Wesleyan understanding of grace](#)
 - In 250 words, explain the three types of grace and how you have experienced God's grace for yourself or in the community with others.
- Download and Read: ["By Water and the Spirit"](#)
- Download and Read: ["This Holy Mystery"](#)
- Talk with three individuals from your church or community about their understanding or experience of one or more of the sacraments. Then write in 500 words about your experience with and understanding of the sacraments: baptism and communion.
 - Submit written work to Megan McKay at mmckay@epagnj.org by **April 28th**. Work should be typed in Times New Romans, font 12, double-spaced with your name on each page. File should be titled "Your Name_Sacraments and Grace".

Safe Sanctuaries

Prior to Tuesday, April 21st meeting on Zoom

To be Safe Sanctuary Certified there is a 1-hour online training that will need to be completed called *Sexual Abuse Prevention Training*. This 1-hour training class will need to be completed online between April 21st, 2025 and April 28th, 2026. Information will be provided during the April 21st class.

Please read and write out responses to the following questions. Responses should be submitted via email to gnjsafesanctuaries@epagnj.org by April 20, 2026. ***Note this is a different email than the other homework submissions. Please be sure you send your work to the correct email address.***

- Why do you think a local church needs a Safe Sanctuary Policy?
- How would you use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (Scripture, Reason, Tradition, and Experience) to explain to your congregation why having a plan/policy/procedure to protect youth, children, and vulnerable adults is necessary and of biblical importance?
- What kinds of ministries do you have currently at your church or that you might want to one day have that would require you to think through safe sanctuaries?
- If your church were adamant against a Safe Sanctuaries policy, how would you help them to see its importance and how, even if you are in a small church, you might be able to be creative enough to make it happen?

Self-Assessment:

Please type your responses to each question below in up to 200 words. Please ensure that your name is on each page of your work. Responses should be emailed to Megan McKay at mmckay@epagnj.org no later than **April 28th**.

1. From your experience in class and in ministry, what are your ministry strengths? Be specific. How will you continue to grow in your strengths?
2. What topics of ministry would you identify as your areas of growth? What opportunities or resources can help you develop your skills?