

Wesley Theological Seminary

Course of Study School

2017

CS224 Administration and Polity
Weekend Course of Study School
September 8-9 and October 13-14, 2017
Brunswick United Methodist Church, Brunswick, ME
Faculty: Rev Lori Wagner
Email: loribethwagner@gmail.com

Objectives and Goals

This course focuses on developing the student's competency as an administrator in a United Methodist congregation.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a biblical and theological understanding of polity.
2. Understand and explain the polity of The United Methodist Church, including conferencing, oversight, and discipline.
3. Articulate the nature of stewardship biblically and theologically.
4. Identify techniques and develop skills as effective administrators of local churches, including financial management.

Required Texts

Flowers, John and Karen Vannoy, *10 Temptations of the Church: Why Churches Decline and What to Do About it*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012)

Warner, Lacey C., *The Method of Our Mission*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014)

Weems, Lovett H., Jr., *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999)

The Book of Discipline, 2016, (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House)

Supplemental Texts (not necessary or required but helpful)

Bullard, George, *Healthy Church Budgets Empower Missional Ministry*, (Kindle E-Book, 2014)

Christopher, J. Clif, *Not Your Parent's Offering Plate*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2015)

McElroy, J. Scott, *The Creative Church Handbook*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015)

Stott, John and Christopher J. H. Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015)

Sweet, Leonard., *The Greatest Story Never Told: Revive Us Again*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012)

Sweet, Leonard, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church*, (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009)

Wilson, Len and Jason Moore, *Taking Flight with Creativity: Worship Design Teams That Work*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009)

Reading Assignments

Reading of all required materials should be completed prior to the first day of class.

Participation

Because of the brevity of the course, full participation is necessary on all four meeting days (two in September and two in October). All students are expected to participate in all discussions and group activities.

Written Assignments

Written Assignments for ***Weekend One*** below are due by Monday, September 4th in preparation for your first class on Friday, September 8th. Please email them to loribethwagner@gmail.com in addition to posting them on Blackboard.

Written Assignments for ***Weekend Two*** below are due by Monday October 9th in preparation for your first class on Friday, October 13th. Please email them to loribethwagner@gmail.com in addition to posting them on Blackboard.

Weekend One Assignments:

1. What do you think the difference is between “Franchise Church” and “Organic Church”? What does it mean to you and to your church today, as Lovett Weems puts it, to “go where the people are”? (2 pgs)
2. Both Weems and Flowers/Vannoy describe churches that “don’t want to grow” (Weems 39) and some that want to grow but unconsciously thwart their growth through status quo-preserving behaviors (Flowers/Vannoy). Describe behaviors you’ve experienced in your own ministry, and how you’ve handled them. How could you handle them differently after reading these books? (3 pgs)
3. What did John Wesley mean by “third alternatives”? What will it mean for you today to leave in “creative tension”? (2 pgs)
4. What is the difference between “praying a common prayer” and “praying in common”? What does it mean to be a diverse church that worships in unity? What are ways you can foster harmony within a diverse church culture? (2 pgs)
5. What is the Wesleyan idea of connection (see Weems Chapter 9)? What does it mean to be “connective” in our 21st century churches? (3 pgs)

Weekend Two Assignments:

1. What is your biblical understanding of church finance and stewardship? What is your theological understanding? (2 pgs)
2. What does it mean to be a trustee? Use both scripture and the Book of Discipline as a guide for your answer. (2 pgs)
3. One of the oldest metaphors in Christian history is the ship on the open seas. What do you think this metaphor tells us about mission? About ministry? About relationships? About being Jesus' Church? (2 pgs)
4. What is your understanding of "discipline" in the United Methodist Church? Use the Book of Discipline and scripture to answer this question, as well as the book by Lacey Warner. (3 pgs)
5. What does the phrase mean to you, "ministry of all Christians" (Warner p. 70)? What does this concept mean in the life of the Church? How can you facilitate this as an "administrator" of a local church? (2 pgs)

Writing Guidelines

Please type all papers using a 12-point font, double spacing, and one-inch margins. Please show evidence in your work that you have read the course material and are applying what you have learned to your ministry context.

Course Schedule

Friday, September 8

1 PM

1:30 or 2 PM – 4:30 PM

Worship

Session I:

- Ad-Ministering to Your Congregation Can Be Fun!
- Head, Heart, and Holy Spirit: the Biblical and Theological Roots of Administration

- What is Polity and Why Do We Need it?
- Methodist Polity: A History
- The Importance of Connection
- Holy Conferencing, Itineracy, and “Discipline” in the United Methodist Tradition
 - Group Activity: “Connecting” in Today’s Church

4:30-4:45 PM

BREAK

4:45-7 PM

Session II:

- The Local Church: Mission and Ministry
- Every Church Has a Mission, but It May Not Be Jesus’ Mission
- The Church and God’s Mission
- You Can’t Plant Oranges in Alaska!
- The Role of the Pastor in Ministry and Mission
- Who Are My Parishioners?
- It’s All About Jesus
- The Church is Not a Vacuum: Cultural Context and Community
- It’s All About Relationships!
- Church Global and Church Local
- The Organic Church: Every Vine Needs a Trellis
- 21st Century “Field Preaching”
 - Activity: Creating Space for Ministry and Mission

7PM-8PM

DINNER BREAK

8PM-9PM

Session III:

- “My Church is a House of Prayer”: Keeping the Church the Church

Saturday, September 9

9 AM-1 PM

Session IV:

- The Astute Pastor: Reading Verbal Clues and Paying Attention to Dynamics
- Making Meetings Fun!
- Flattening the Playing Field, so Everyone Can Play
- Helping People Follow Jesus Even in the Tough Times
- Church Conflict and How to Deal with It Calmly and Creatively
- Reasons Churches Decline and What to Do About It!
- That Dirty Word: C H A N G E
- The Power of Scripture for Shepherds and Sherpas
- The Power of Metaphor as a Change Agent
 - Activity: What is Your Church’s “Metaphor”?

Friday, October 13

1 PM

Worship

2 PM-4:30 PM

Session I:

- God's Economy: A Theology of Finance
- A Biblical View of Money
- Finance and the Local Church
- Ignorance Will Cost You!
- How to Read a Spreadsheet
- Financial Ethics are Important!
- We Are Not Our Buildings
- Does Your Budget Feed Your Mission?
- The Art of Missional Budgeting
 - Group Activity: Creating A Missional Budget

4:30-4:45 PM

BREAK

4:45-7:00 PM

Session II:

- You Need the Rich AND the Poor in Your Church
- A Theology of Trusteeship
- Creative Stewardship
- What is Your Story?
- Focus On Giving, Not On Receiving
- Church, Community, and Money
- Creative Fundraising
- Grants and Gifts
- Take a Hint from Culture!
 - Activity: Creating a Story

7:00-8:00 PM

DINNER BREAK

8:00-9:00 PM

Session III:

- Creating A Visual Annual Report

Saturday, October 14

9 AM-1 PM

Session IV:

- The Creative Pastor
- The Pastor as Mentor
- Always Have A Few in the Wings!
- Involving People in Worship: We Need YOU!
- Parables Are Your Friend
- The Church on the Edge
- The Wired Church
- Collaborative Ministry and Your Community
- Building Relationships Inside and Outside the Church
- Every Church Needs a “Porch”
- Organization, Delegating, and Making It Easy
- Worship Design Teams, Care Teams, Ministry and Mission Teams, Oh MY!
- Do “Little” Large
- Live a Little! Laugh a LOT!
 - My Favorite Parable Redux

Grading

Week One Essays: 30 pts

Week Two Essays: 30 pts

Attendance and Participation: 10

In-Class Activities: 30

