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| Student Handbook2017-2018 | *The Institute of Lutheran Theology is a Christian faith community, seminary and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ's church throughout the world.*  |

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# Institutional Mission & Goals

## ILT Mission Statement

*ILT of Lutheran Theology is a Christian faith community, seminary and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ's church throughout the world.*

## ILT's Goals

* ILT students will love, know and apply the Scriptures as the Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of all their teaching.
* ILT students will interpret the Scriptures as Law and Gospel in light of (as understood in) the Lutheran Confessional writings.
* ILT students will recognize (saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ to engage the reality of the world in need) both the full revelation of Jesus Christ and the full reality of the world as essential for the theological task.
* ILT students will exhibit a spirit of openness in theological discussion and interaction.
* ILT students will confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only hope for the world.

## Student & Religious Life Mission Statement

*The Office of Student and Religious Life serves the mission of ILT by providing for the spiritual and religious needs of ILT’s student body and wider community.*

## Objectives

* The Office of Student and Religious Life provides effective pastoral care and leadership for the entire ILT community.
* The Office of Student and Religious Life provides guidance and pastoral care for students and prospective students in vocational discernment.
* The Office of Student and Religious Life fosters the continued participation of alumni and the ILT community.

## Theological Foundations

Because ILT of Lutheran Theology is established as a theological endeavor holding to the reality of God and the scandal of the cross, the authority of Scripture, the truth of Lutheran affirmations, and the notion that the church is hidden yet revealed, ILT of Lutheran Theology says certain things about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, humanity, the church, and the end times.

God

**Is the God who hides and the God who reveals Himself.**

* God hides behind the mask of His attributes in order to reveal Himself in His Word.

Christ

**Is the finite human who contains the infinite divinity.**

* Jesus Christ - true God from eternity and true man born of the Virgin Mary - is the Word of God, the Savior of the world, and our Lord; He was crucified for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

The Holy Spirit

**Is the Spirit who creates out of nothing.**

* Working through the Word and Sacraments alone - apart from reason and free will, the Holy Spirit creates faith in Christ where there had only been the nothingness of unbelief.

Humanity

**Is simultaneously and totally saint and sinner.**

* During the days of their Baptism, human beings are totally justified and sanctified, possessing already their eternal life; yet, these same beings are at one and the same time totally sinful and waiting upon their mortal end.

The Church

**Is always in need of reform.**

* Whenever the church seeks to be known outside of its concrete signs (Word, Baptism, Supper, Absolution, Ministry, Prayer, and Cross), it needs reformation; that is - the repentance delivered through the preached Word of God.

The End Time

**Is in Jesus Christ, who is the new creation.**

* The kingdom has come and already comes in the person of Jesus Christ. It comes to faith now and will come in visible glory on the last day.

## Philosophical Presuppositions

In addition to our commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, five foundational principles shape our curriculum and thinking:

Theological Realism

**God is real and exists beyond human awareness, conception, and language.**

* Accordingly, when we pray, we do not pray to ourselves, but to a God whose existence does not depend upon us.

Semantic Realism

**God's gift of language enables us to make truth claims about God.**

* Human emotion, thought, and language do not ultimately determine what is true or false about God, but rather our language reflects the determinate contour of the divine.

Theophysical Causality

**God can and does act in the world.**

* Divine action must not be construed only metaphorically.

A Lutheran Theology of Nature

**God expresses Himself in the natural order.**

* Conversation with science and technology furthers our recognition that God expresses Himself in the natural order in ways that inform our understanding of the divine.

The Internal Clarity of Scripture

**God's Word is clear, not obscure.**

* God's revelation is expressed clearly in Holy Scripture, whose words can be understood by the reader as the Holy Spirit interprets their meaning.

## Institutional History

In 2006 the Word Alone Network, a confessional movement within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), decided to launch a House of Studies to carry forward Biblical and confessional Lutheranism in North America into the next century. The movement had identified numerous problems with the existing eight seminaries of the ELCA. Most basically, although they were ostensibly committed to the authority of the Bible and Lutheran Confessions, this commitment was increasingly not honored in fact. Therefore, the Word Alone Network established a House of Studies with the goal of creating an autonomous, independent, and accredited educational initiative that would prepare future pastors in the scriptural hermeneutic of the Lutheran reformation. This House of Studies became the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) in December of 2007, having begun offering online classes by the use of video conferencing in the fall of 2007. In the fall of 2009, ILT launched its first program, a Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC), with 11 students and 3 courses. This is a non-credit 12-course program to train lay people for ministry within congregations that otherwise would not be able to get a pastor. In the spring of 2010, ILT launched a Master of Divinity program, beginning with 6 courses offered to 20 students.

Today, the Institute of Lutheran Theology is a strong organization with a growing constituency and a clear identity and mission. The Mission Statement that the Board of Directors adopted in July of 2015 is carefully crafted to articulate that identity and mission:

The Institute of Lutheran Theology is a Christian faith community, seminary and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ’s church throughout the world.

ILT is a “Christian faith community,” not merely a school. It is a community of students, teachers, supporters, and staff who find their unity in Jesus Christ alone, in whom they are bound together in love and supported by mutual intercessory prayer. ILT is a “seminary and graduate school,” a seedbed of the Word, where teachers and students study the Scriptures and the Christian tradition so that the Word may dwell richly in the hearts of all who learn and bear fruit in lives of faith and love. Education at ILT is “rigorous,” holding to the highest academic standards appropriate to the level of education offered. And everything at ILT centers on “equipping” people to proclaim the gospel. Students don’t just learn intellectually; they become seasoned and tried followers of Jesus who proclaim the gospel “effectively.” Many of these followers of Jesus are “pastors” entrusted with the public ministry of the Word and Sacrament, some are “teachers” and some are “lay people” who come away from the their ILT experience better equipped for their own vocations. All three groups “serve Christ’s church” and this service knows no boundaries, but extends around the world, wherever the Spirit calls.

ILT’s Institutional Program Outcomes describe its mission in more detail. They express in the broadest terms what ILT hopes will be the outcome for anyone who participates in any of its educational programs:

1. ILT students will love, know and apply the Scriptures as the Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of all their teaching.
2. ILT students will interpret the Scriptures as Law and Gospel in light of the Lutheran Confessional writings.
3. ILT students will recognize both the full revelation of Jesus Christ and the full reality of the world as essential for the theological task.
4. ILT students will exhibit a spirit of openness in theological discussion and interaction.
5. ILT students will confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only hope for the world.

These outcomes express three foundational characteristics of ILT:

1. ILT is biblical and confessional. Outcomes 1, 2, and 5 express the heart of ILT’s theological stance, articulated in its Theological Foundations. (2017-2018 Academic Catalog, p. 8) ILT is the product of a struggle to confess and proclaim the authentic gospel in the face of a lethal attack on it. It exists to equip people to lift up the gospel of Jesus Christ before the whole church and before the world.
2. ILT is engaged with the contemporary world. Outcome 3 expresses ILT’s conviction that it is not enough to preserve the gospel; the church needs to speak the gospel in its fullness in engagement with the full reality of the contemporary secular world. ILT is committed to a deep knowledge of and engagement with the modern and postmodern world. As part of that commitment, ILT takes seriously its responsibility to articulate the truth conditions of theological statements. ILT is unusual among theological seminaries in that, in addition to publicizing its theological commitments, it also sets forth its Philosophical Presuppositions (2017-2018 Academic Catalog, p. 9).
3. ILT is a place of freedom. The church’s unity is a gift of the gospel, given as Christ is proclaimed in Word and Sacrament. Theology is the church’s necessary work of reflecting on God’s Word to ensure that it is faithfully proclaimed in ever changing contexts. The unity that the ILT community has in Christ gives it the freedom to engage in this theological task with mutual respect, openness, frankness, and trust, as expressed in Outcome 4. Because it has taken its stand on the gospel, ILT has attracted Lutherans from many traditions. Perhaps no other seminary in American Lutheran history has brought together so many varieties of Lutherans. By no means are all in agreement on every matter, but all recognize their oneness in faith and confession and engage together and challenge and sharpen one another for the great task of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to a new generation.

These commitments are the heart and soul of the Institute of Lutheran Theology, its reason for being. But at the beginning ILT was faced with the question of how to carry out this mission. Its potential constituency was scattered in congregations across North America. ILT had no campus and no money to buy or build one. Potential students were mostly older, with families, jobs, and other commitments that would make it hard for them to move to a campus in any case. And while traditional residential seminary education can provide a supportive Christian community for worship and learning, it is also expensive and can tend to isolate students from real-life experience of ministry. In the face of such factors, ILT looked for an alternative way of delivering theological education using online video conferencing.

Today, the Graduate School has six programs. The Masters of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) program provides a basic theological education that prepares students to be teachers of religion in congregations or schools or for advanced theological study. The Master of Arts in Religion-Biblical Theology and the Master of Arts in Religion-Theology programs provide more specialized theological education for teachers of religion, congregational lay workers, or those preparing for more advanced academic study. The Master of Divinity (M. Div.) program equips students to be pastors. It is a rigorous 90-credit program of study in Bible, theology, history and philosophy, with a solid curriculum in pastoral theology and a required full-year internship. The Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) is a research degree that provides an opportunity for pastors with an M. Div. to delve deeply into a chosen area of theology. The Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) program is a three-year program for practicing congregational pastors that enables them to deepen their understanding of the issues surrounding evangelizing the unreached and to strengthen their own and their congregation’s outreach.

Educational Ministries encompasses non-credit educational programs. The Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC) program consists of 12 courses (2 hours a week for 15 weeks) that cover core topics in Bible, theology and ministry and provide a concentrated theological education for laypeople who are moving into pastoral roles within their congregations. The Youth and Family Ministry Certificate (YFC) is a similar program sharing many of the same courses, but with ministry courses focused on youth and family. Students in this program are generally preparing for non-ordained ministry. The Faith and Life Certificate (FLC) program is a shorter program of only 6 courses designed for equipping laypeople in their vocations and volunteer work in the church. The Certificate of Mission Studies (CMS) program trains persons for cross-cultural ministry, either abroad or at home.

Besides the certificate programs, ILT offers other educational services to congregations and individuals. It offers free educational videos on biblical and theological topics taught by ILT faculty and associates. It publishes a weekly devotional in the form of a bulletin insert called “Table Talk.” ILT faculty members are available to speak at congregations around the country on various topics at “Word at Work Workshops.”

In the past few years, the Institute of Lutheran Theology has made great strides in developing as an institution of higher learning. It has appropriate governance, a qualified and competent administration, transparent policies and procedures, a highly qualified and self-governing faculty, curricula taught at appropriate levels of rigor, diversified and reliable revenue streams, and a growing constituency that trusts it to provide Biblical and confessional theological education. ILT is what its founders hoped it would be: a biblical and confessional witness to Jesus Christ, standing opposed to the forces of a secular age that would empty the gospel of its content while at the same time seeking to speak the gospel to that same secular age in ways that are respectful and winning. It calls Lutherans of all traditions to unity in their one confession and cooperation in the theological and evangelistic task before them. It is on this basis that it seeks to be a Christian faith community, seminary, and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ’s church throughout the world.

# Introduction to Student Life

The Institute of Lutheran theology is, above all, a Christian Faith Community that is committed to life in the Lutheran tradition. This tradition holds that:

* Scripture is God’s inspired Word of Law and Gospel.
* Scripture—because it is the Word of God, Jesus Christ--is the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.
* The Lutheran Confessions are true witnesses to that Word of God as Law and Gospel.
* The Lutheran Confessions are normative for our teaching and practice.
* All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (cf. Romans 3:23).
* While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (cf. Romans 5:8).
* We are justified, therefore, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ who is our redemption (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9).
* While we live in this world awaiting the world to come, we live simultaneously as fully sinful yet completely justified.
* Before God we have confidence that Jesus Christ has already accomplished our full and complete redemption. Before the neighbor, though, we remain sinners whose sin must be restrained.

# Christian Formation

Christian formation through ILT is a multi-faceted effort. It is academic. It is practical. It is personal. Christian formation demands academic education to train students as the resident theologians of their congregations or specific call. Christian formation demands practical experience to form students to provide the “care-of-souls” expected of any Christian, but especially one called to the office of Word and Sacrament. Christian formation demands personal development through engagement of the three rules—“*meditatio,” “oratio,” & “tentatio*”—by which our God fashions his people into proper theologians.

To provide for the academic education of its students, ILT has established several programs: Faith and Life Certificate (FLC), Youth and Family Certificate (YFC), Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC), Certificate of Mission Studies (CMS), Master of Arts in Religion (MAR), Master of Divinity (MDiv), and Master of Sacred Theology (STM), and Doctor of Ministry (DMin). These programs are designed to be academically challenging and intellectually rigorous.

To deliver the practical experience, ILT expects all its students to be embedded in the life of their congregation and will certify such involvement as requested by the various church bodies receiving its students. Especially, to form pastors as “soul-caregivers,” ILT has established its contextual education program. Because ILT is a theological school independent of church body affiliation and providing several church bodies with graduates, its primary relationships are with congregations and not adjudicatory bodies. ILT considers congregations, who provide it with students from their midst and within their midst, to be the seminaries—the “seedbed”—of pastoral formation. The academic education programs at ILT are a delivery system so that the Word of God forges theologically trained pastors and others on the anvil of the church’s parish ministry.

To provide for the personal development beneath the three rules by which God fashions his people into proper theologians, ILT integrates a mentoring relationship into its contextual education program.

## Christian Formation through Engaging the Three Rules

ILT deploys the three rules which form a theologian. Luther named these rules in the Preface to the 1543 Edition of the German Writings. For those who would be theologians—and every Christian is a theologian in Luther’s estimation—for those who would be theologians, these three rules function as powers or authorities which fashion and form the would-be theologian. These three rules are: the rule of meditation, the rule of prayer, and the rule of struggle. Together, these rules work spiritual formation upon the participant; and the participant is formed spiritually as he/she engages the three rules.

The use of these three rules transcends one of the major obstacles institutions of higher education have had with pastoral formation: the struggle to balance head learning and heart learning—the intellectual and the practical—the life of books and the life of prayer. Oswald Beyer speaks of Luther's' "formula" this way:

It contains two clear negations: it excludes an understanding of theology that sees it exclusively or even predominantly as a theory as much as it excludes the view that sees it as a program of action. In short, in place of the binary scheme of theory and practice it supports a threefold scheme that besides knowledge and action takes account of faith, which establishes both and liberates them for a relative autonomy.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Luther knew this struggle as well and in response he described the three rules, the three forces that form and fashion a theologian. Luther found this unique understanding of pastoral formation given by King David in Psalm one hundred nineteen. “There,” Luther said, “you will find three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm. They are *Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*” (prayer, meditation, and struggle).[[2]](#footnote-2)

Meditation is simply the theologian being so grasped by the Word of God in its external clarity that the would-be theologian is internally clarified. Theologians thus come to know the truth about themselves and the truth about God. God’s Word “rules” over them, forging them as a hammer[[3]](#footnote-3) works the iron on an anvil. The theologian is so subject to scripture that its word defines his reality, and--by the work of the Holy Spirit--delivers faith in Christ.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Prayer is simply what results when such truth is revealed and such faith is delivered. The theologian stands as a sinful, mortal creature before an almighty and immortal Creator. The theologian stands as a brother or sister to Jesus Christ before a benevolent Father. The theologian’s reality in the *“simul iustus et peccator”* (totally justified and totally sinful at one and the same time) is revealed. When such truth is revealed, one cannot help but pray. Prayer is the spontaneous cry and lament of a desperate and dying sinner: “Lord, have mercy!" Prayer is the voice of a saint rendering spontaneous praise and thanksgiving: “Thanks be to God!”

Struggle is simply the life of the theologian caught in the grasp of two realities. In faith, they have the reality of what is promised by the Word of God. Yet, by their flesh, they have the reality of what is experienced by reason and the senses. Theologians struggle to receive righteousness by the will of God being done unto them. This is their passive life beneath the Word. They struggle to achieve righteousness before their neighbors who by God’s will they are to serve. This is their active life before the world. ILT resolves the intellectual vs. practical struggle by embedding its students in the crucible of congregational life. There, they are under the Word, caught up in prayer, and living the struggle daily. There, participating students practice spiritual formation and are formed spiritually.

Consider, in summary, Bayer and his description of how the rules are connected within the formula:

As we look now at the three terms, each of which describes a rule, the first thing to note is that these rules are not meant to be considered in isolation and only later reconnected. Rather, from the start they set out one single way of suffering and life, of listening and speaking, of thinking and writing. We are dealing with a single rule--a single dynamic movement, or a process that is by no means linear, in which we can distinguish three main factors, all of which are interconnected.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Students engage the three rules as they are embedded in the life of their congregations and deep in the study of God’s Word and its way with God’s people. There, in the crucible of congregational life, the students are under the Word, caught up in prayer, and living the struggle daily. They are being fashioned by “*meditatio,” “oratio,” & “tentatio*” into Christian theologians.

## Christian Formation in the Life of the Student Body

ILT provides opportunities for its students to engage the three rules as they engage one another and ILT during their course of studies.

### Meditatio (Word: Life beneath the Word of God)

* Students at ILT may choose or be assigned a “Chapel Buddy.” This Chapel Buddy will commit to viewing the same one of ILT’s regular online chapel services as the student. Together, they will meet weekly by conference call, or Skype call, or via Adobe Connect to discuss the message with one another
* Students at ILT may be recommended by the faculty teaching homiletics and preaching for assignments as one of the preachers in ILT’s online chapel service
* Students at ILT may subscribe to, or be subscribed, ILT’s weekly devotional writing, Table Talk. They may use this lectionary-based resource for their personal devotions and meditations on the texts for the week
* Students at ILT receive the Daily Texts to ground them daily in God’s Word and printed on Facebook
* Students at ILT can attend a weekly text study held via Skype (contact the Dean of Student and Religious Life, tswenson@ilt.org)

### Oratio (Prayer: the cry of those living beneath the Word of God while still in the world)

* Students at ILT have opportunity to pray with and for one another as faculty are encouraged to open class sessions with student-led prayer
* Students at ILT have opportunity to share prayer concerns with one another and ILT’s faculty and staff through the sharing of prayer concerns via the Populi student management platform
* Students at ILT have opportunity to receive ILT’s weekly prayer newsletter—The Epaphras Prayer Letter—and to contribute prayer concerns to it

### Tentatio (Struggle/Suffering: caught up in the reality of living in the world but being of the Word)

* Students at ILT have the opportunity in every class session to engage their circumstances with their growing scriptural and theological knowledge
* Students at ILT can visit the Student Lounge—an online meeting room—where students gather for fellowship and study.
* Students at ILT can schedule face-to-face Skype sessions with the Dean of Chapel for counseling during the struggles and sufferings of their daily callings.
* Students at ILT can schedule in-person meetings with the Dean of Chapel for counseling during the struggles and sufferings of their daily callings whenever the Dean may be traveling in their locale
* Students at ILT can participate in Houses of Study—week-long gatherings of exegetical and pastoral study where students come together in a specific locale; there, they can enjoy, what Luther called in his Smalkald Articles, “the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints”
* Students at ILT can participate in the gatherings hosted by ILT when it attends the various church body conventions.

## Christian Formation through the Expectations of Student Faith and Life

Out of the Lutheran tradition, ILT holds that God has two answers for human sin—the gospel and the law: 1) God’s gospel answer to human sin is the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, and the new life in Christ which is then delivered. This is the new life lived beneath the Gospel. 2) God’s law answer to human sin is either the restraint of that sin by society’s laws and rules--both legislative and cultural, or by the self-restraint of sin by obedience to the Lord’s commandments. This is life lived under the law. ILT, as a Christian community, acknowledges that their public lives reflect upon the public’s opinion of ILT. In so acknowledging, they recognize that God in Jesus Christ brings sinners to repentance and new life so that their sins will be forgiven and they can live under the restraint of their sin by society’s laws and rules—both legislative and cultural, and under their self-restraint by the Lord’s commandments.

Since a certificate or degree from the Institute of Lutheran Theology is perceived as a recommendation to a church body, or a congregation, for a ministry position, a student’s living within such a faith and life is as important as his or her academic achievements in earning such a recommendation. Obstinate refusal to live in repentance or under restraint—that is, to live under God’s law and God’s gospel—may call into question a student’s continued study at ILT.

For all purposes of this policy, the decision of the President as to what constitutes a student’s repentance and restraint shall be final and binding. Students who are unfamiliar with the beliefs and teachings of the Lutheran tradition on any subject should inquire about them from their advisor. He can refer questions to appropriate publications or, if necessary, can arrange for the student to be counseled by the Dean of Student and Religious Life.

# Student Discipline

Meeting the expectations for faith and life and the requirements of academic integrity are necessary for a student’s continued study at ILT. ILT believes these expectations and requirements are consistent with Scripture, the Lutheran confessional witness, the calling to ministry, and ILT’s stated intentions (e.g. mission statement, goals, etc.) Students not meeting those expectations and requirements will come under institutional and/or academic discipline. As a result of that discipline, they may lose their opportunity for continued study at, or graduation from, ILT.

## Disciplinary Procedures

Should such discipline be necessary, its primary goals will be restorative rather than punitive, seeking to restore both the integrity of the student and the integrity of ILT.

Once the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Educational Ministry or the Dean of Student and Religious Life is made aware of a situation which may potentially result in the discipline of a student, their first step is to schedule and hold a conversation with the student. If it is an academic matter, the Dean of Academic Affairs or the Dean of Educational Ministry will preside as is appropriate. If it is a matter of faith and life or other institutional matters, the Dean of Student and Religious Life will preside.

During that initial conversation, the situation with its potential for discipline will be presented to the student. The appropriate dean will provide the student with a written statement describing the situation prompting the potential for discipline. If the accuracy of the situation is agreed to by both the dean and student, then the dean will ask the student if he or she repents of his or her behavior and how the situation may be rectified. If the accuracy of the situation is contested or there is no repentance by the student, then the disciplinary process will continue, perhaps to probation, suspension, or expulsion. At that point, a student may appeal the proceedings to a committee of disinterested faculty and students (if an academic matter) or a committee of disinterested administrators and students (if a non-academic matter). This procedure is outlined in the Student Rights and Due Process section below. A final appeal can be made to the President’s Table.

## Student Rights and Due Process

All students have the right to due process. From the very first meeting regarding a situation of potential discipline, ILT’s students possess these opportunities:

* The student has a right to know the situation provoking potential discipline and to receive a description of that situation in writing.
* The student has a right to a hearing consisting of a committee of two disinterested faculty, two students, and the Dean of Academic Affairs or Dean of Educational Ministry as appropriate if the situation is an academic one; or to have a hearing consisting of a committee of two disinterested administrators, two students, and the Dean of Student and Religious Life if the situation is a non-academic one. This committee will make a recommendation to the President’s Table, which will make the final decision. The final decision will be signed by the president and a copy will be given to the student.
* The student also has a right to dispute the situation and/or confront those presenting the situation. This means the student can explain his or her side of the story, cross-examine witnesses, or bring his or her own witnesses.
* A student may be represented or assisted by anyone he or she chooses, even legal counsel.
* The student has a right to the minutes of the proceedings and a written copy of the decision.
* The student may appeal this decision by requesting another hearing before the President’s Table. The final decision will be signed by the president and a copy will be given to the student.

# Student Services

## Academic Counseling

The Institute of Lutheran Theology takes seriously its commitment to academic rigor. Thus, it recognizes the need of its students for academic advising as they engage with it in pursuit of that academic rigor and excellence. ILT provides academic advisors and programs to inform, guide, empower, and encourage students from recruitment to graduation. Students are responsible for their academic and intellectual progress; academic advisors assist with educational planning that leads to their timely matriculation and graduation. As students commit to, and invest in, an action-oriented decision-making process, their success becomes more likely. Such commitment and investment delivers intellectual and personal development resulting in informed and invested educational choices.

## Career Guidance

At the Institute of Lutheran Theology, career guidance is called vocational discernment. Vocational discernment takes place when ILT personnel engage potential students and students themselves in assessing their call and gifts, making decisions, developing plans to meet their objectives, and, discussing and clarifying educational, career, and life goals to assist students, first in the question of enrollment and second, in systematic and intentional course selection.

## Pastoral Counseling

The Dean of Student and Religious Life who is also ILT’s Dean of Chapel is available to students for pastoral counseling. As the events of a student’s life may become overwhelming and/or perplexing, the Dean is able to address these events and issues with the student, bringing the light of Christ into the circumstances, and addressing them with the law and the gospel as delivered by scripture.

## Textbook Purchase

The Institute of Lutheran Theology does not require students to use a particular facility for textbook purchase. ILT is an AmazonSmile affiliate and its bookstore site has links to course books and textbooks required by the faculty in their courses found in Populi. The bookstore includes links to books authored by faculty and other books and merchandise of a Christian or otherwise useful nature. The bookstore can be found at [www.ilt.org](http://www.ilt.org).

Other low-cost providers as barnesandnoble.com, ebay.com, half.com, bookfinder.com, etc., are also sufficient providers of our textbooks. Students should pay careful attention to the bibliographic information provided in syllabi to make sure that proper editions of the textbooks are being purchased.

## Communities of Faith

The students’ primary community of faith is their local congregation. Students will demonstrate their active involvement in their community of faith through their course work and will be sustained in their faith and vocational preparation through the support of the community. The compassion, caring, and nurturing support of ILT faculty, staff, and fellow students will be expressed through classes, team assignments, student activities, and theological conferences.

## Fellowship Program

The ILT Master of Divinity Fellowship provides an enhanced learning experience and more rapid progress toward degree completion for Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Religion students.

* Students complete 18-30 credits in a year.
* Students experience face to face involvement in ILT’s worship and learning community on site at ILT’s Brookings campus.
* Students receive significant financial aid, including $5,000.00 in tuition grants and work-study to cover the rest of the tuition.
* Students gain experience and knowledge of ILT’s teaching and operations.

Admission Requirements

* The student must be accepted into the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts in Religion program at ILT.
* New students with an undergraduate degree must have a minimum GPA of 3.00.
* New students with graduate degrees must have a minimum GPA of 3.30.
* Current ILT students must have a minimum GPA of 3.30.
* A short paper describing the goals the student wishes to accomplish through the Fellowship year.

Applications will be considered on a first come first served basis. Please contact the Admissions Office to learn more about the application process or fill out the application on [www.ilt.org](http://www.ilt.org).

## Scholarships

Stavanger Lutheran Church – LCMC M.Div. Scholarship

Provided by Stavanger Lutheran Church in Seneca IL, this scholarship is for those students who are preparing to serve as pastors in the LCMC having earned a Master of Divinity degree. Those students who are awarded this scholarship will receive tuition credit in an amount set by the faculty based on the number of awards and the availability of funds.

Clark LCMC M.Div Scholarship

Provided by the Clark family, this scholarship is available for those students who are preparing to serve as pastors in the LCMC having earned the Master of Divinity degree. Those students who are awarded this scholarship will receive tuition credit in an amount set by the faculty based upon available funds.

Bunkowske D.Min. Scholarship

Provided by Eugene Bunkowske family, this scholarship is available for those students who are in the Doctor of Ministry Program. Students awarded this scholarship will receive tuition credit in an amount set by the faculty based upon availability of funds.

Scholarship Application Process

**Preliminary Considerations:**

When applying to ILT for Scholarships, students need to ensure they thoroughly understand all the guidelines and stipulations.

* All scholarship recipients must be U.S. citizens, or permanent residents.
* All scholarship funding depends on available funds, which could vary from year to year.
* It is the students’ responsibility to make sure the scholarship application they submit is complete.
* Once submitted, all application materials become the property of ILT and will not be returned to the student.
* Applications are processed by designated ILT staff and evaluated by a representative group from the graduate faculty.

​**Portfolio Preparation: ​**

The applicant evaluation is a portfolio based process to establish merit.

The portfolio includes the following items:

* A completed online application form.
* Official transcripts from all other academic institutions previously attended.
* A statement of faith.
* An academic essay on a topic determined by ILT and prepared according to approved institutional guidelines.
* Three letters of recommendation:
	+ One letter should be from a person who is able to speak to the applicant’s academic competencies.
	+ A second letter should be from a person who is able to speak to the applicant’s spiritual and pastoral competencies.
	+ A third letter should be from a person who is able to speak to the applicant’s moral character.
* A personal statement organized according to the following headings and in this order:
	+ Autobiography: Provide a brief personal history (1-2 paragraphs).
	+ The call to minister within a parish context: Describe the nature of your call and how you anticipate the education you receive from ILT preparing you for/enhancing your effectiveness in that call.
	+ Ministry experience: Describe your involvement in your church, along with other relevant areas of service in your community.
	+ Justification: State the reasons why you think you are a qualified candidate for the scholarship.

## Financial Aid

Each year the Board of Directors determine the amount of money available for assistance to students who are in financial need. The financial aid that is awarded each semester is limited to the amount determined by the Board of Directors. In the case that the total aid required to fulfill the requests from students does not exceed that amount, all students who apply will be granted financial aid. In the case that the total aid required to full the requests does exceed the amount of money allotted for that semester, the students with the greatest financial need will be given priority.

**Financial aid will be awarded in the following ways;**

**Certificate and Master of Divinity/Master of Art in Religion Students**

* Students must take more than one class in the semester they receive financial aid.
* Students who qualify for financial aid will receive tuition credit equal to one course that will be applied to their total tuition for the semester.
* Students are responsible to pay for or find other funding for the remainder of their tuition.

**Master of Sacred Theology and Doctor of Ministry Students**

* Students who qualify for financial aid will receive tuition credit equal to two credits of the course applied to their total tuition for that semester.
* Student are responsible to pay for or find other funding for the remainder of their tuition.

**Students must follow these steps to apply for financial aid:**

* Students receive notice of the availability of financial aid when registration opens for a new semester. This is included as a part of the announcement that registration is open. (ILT does not offer financial aid for the J-term or the summer session.)
* Students request the Financial Aid Application before the first day of class in each semester. The notice of availability includes either an email address for the requesting of a financial aid application or a link to download the financial aid application.
* Students return the Financial Aid Application by the end of the first week of classes.
* Students receive notice of financial aid awards by the end of the second week of classes.
* If any financial aid money allocated for that semester is unused, students may be given the opportunity to make another application.

**​**Students may be asked to provide proof of income by sending a copy of their previous year’s tax statement to the Business Office.

## Work Study

Work study is made available to students as tuition credit. Students can earn $11.67/hour. This is equal to $350 each semester for 2 hours of work per week. Work study options are limited because of the online nature of ILT studies. Work study option will vary with the skills and expertise of the individual applicant. Many applicants will be asked to make phone calls to donors, alumni, or congregations.

## Tutoring

Students may request a tutor free of charge by contacting the business office. Tutoring is available both for individuals and for groups.

Tutors will earn tuition credit as a work study student at the rate of $11.67/hour. To be a tutor a student;

* Must have successfully completed the course with a GPA of 3.5.
* Have a cumulative grade point average of 3.3.
* Have a letter of recommendation from the instructor of the course.

# Student Grievance Policy

Students have the right to a fair hearing if they believe that have been treated unjustly by any member of the staff or faculty. Students who have a grievance against any decision made by the staff or faculty of ILT may share this grievance with the Dean of Student and Religious Life.

## Grievance Procedure

1. Using the student grievance form found in the appendix of this handbook, give a written statement describing the grievance to the Dean of Student and Religious Life
2. The Dean of Student and Religious Life will evaluate the grievance and try to come up with a fair resolution.
3. If necessary, the Dean of Student and Religious Life will hold a meeting between the student and the person who caused the grievance with the purpose of a fair resolution.
4. Appeal: If the student believes the decision of the Dean of Student and Religious Life is unjust, the student may appeal to the President by sending the grievance form to him/her. Decisions of the President are final.

# Financial Matters

Tuition and fees are to be set by the Board Finance Committee by November 30 of the current school year for the following school year.

## Financial Counseling

ILT provides both in-coming and current students with financial counseling regarding various alternatives for paying the cost of their education. ILT provides no financial assistance which would require repayment. To receive financial counseling please call the Business Office.

## Billing and Fees:

The billing for tuition and fees will be assessed at the beginning of the period for which the services are rendered (e.g. semesters, J-terms, or summer sessions) and invoices sent. Tuition and fees will be collected before the services are rendered.

Tuition is due on the first day of each semester. Students are to pay tuition for the semester before the last day to add/drop classes. Payment plan options are available for students, but these must be in place before the last day to add/drop classes. Consequences for late payment include.

* Students who do not pay tuition or have a payment plan in place will not be given access to the online classroom after the last day to add/drop until these conditions are met
* Students who have outstanding tuition payments may not register for the next semester’s classes
* Students will not receive a grade or credit for a course until it is paid in full.
* Students who have outstanding tuition payments may not receive a diploma.
* Balance statements for each student with an outstanding tuition payment will be sent to the student during the first week of each month.

# Other Student Considerations

## Housing

ILT does not have a residential campus and does not provide student housing

## Parking

ILT has sufficient parking at its Brookings campus for students and other visitors.

## Student Employment

ILT does not offer student employment. ILT does have access to congregations who are looking to employ students, if the student can relocate to the congregation’s vicinity. Sometimes a student’s home congregation may employ a student as they are engaged in their Contextual Education for ILT. There are also work-study options for student who can do work for ILT to earn tuition credit.

## Health Insurance

ILT does not provide health insurance for its students.

## Suggestions, Complaints, and Grievances

The Dean of Student and Religious Life welcomes students to discuss various types of concerns. If a student has a suggestion, complaint or grievance, that student may contact tswenson@ilt.org. The dean may need to converse with the student for further information to clarify the suggestion or investigate the issue. For simple matters, the dean, who keeps written records of actions taken to address issues, will address the issue and send the student a written response. For more complex matters, the dean may discuss the issue with the appropriate administrative personnel before addressing the matter and sending out the response.

If the student is not satisfied with the dean's response, the next step is to ask the dean for reconsideration. If that does not prove satisfactory to the student, the student may ask the dean to appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Educational Ministry, or the Comptroller. In such cases, that administrator will contact the student, write a report on his or her investigation/understanding of the matter, and write a recommendation for how the matter should be addressed. Both the reports from the student dean and the other administrator will be forwarded to the president for a final decision. If the student still feels that the school is operating inappropriately, he or she may forward a complaint to our accrediting agency:

Association for Biblical Higher Education
5850 T G Lee Blvd, Suite 130
Orlando FL 32822

# Appendix: Student Grievance Form

Name:

Program Dean’s Name:

Date Student contacted the Student Services to file appeal or grievance:

Narrative of the Complaint:

Student Signature Date

Title of Person who received Grievance Policy Form:

Decision regarding complaint:

Signature Date

1. Bayer, Oswald, Theology the Lutheran Way, p. 35; Eerdmans, 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Luther, M. (1999). *Vol. 34*: *Luther's works, vol. 34 : Career of the Reformer IV* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (285). Philadelphia: Fortress Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jeremiah 23:29 "Is not my word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Prenter, Regin; Spiritus Creator, p. 50: “Faith in Christ is the presence of Christ in you as a redeeming reality, an incomprehensible and invisible, yet divine reality that tears one away from and places one in contrast with all other realities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bayer, Oswald, Theology the Lutheran Way, p. 42; Eerdmans, 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)