

Life Changing Ministry in the Small Membership Congregation



35th Annual Rural Ministry Conference
March 6-8, 2016

Wartburg Theological Seminary and the Center for Theology and Land Invite you to the 35th Annual Rural Ministry Conference on March 6-8, 2016

Location: All sessions at Best Western Plus Hotel in Dubuque

Registration is limited to the first 200 people and includes lunches and dinners. Does not include lodging.

Early bird rate due by Feb. 8:

1 person: \$170
2 or more: \$150/person

Standard is due Feb. 29:

1 person: \$185
2 or more: \$165/person

Monday Afternoon Workshops

Only: \$50/person

SAVE \$50!

If you are a pastor who has been serving in a rural congregation for less than 5 years, you save \$50!

*Partially funded by:
The Esther and Carl Merklein Foundation*

**Learn more and
register online at
www.ruralministry.com**

WORKSHOPS

Two-Minute Testimonies presented by Rev. Elizabeth Dilley

Utilizing techniques from improv, inspiration from simple photographs and your own experiences in small-membership congregations, participants will learn how to share succinct, powerful stories of life-changing ministry. You don't need to be Jimmy Fallon in order to inspire and delight – just bring your willingness to celebrate the ways church changes people's lives! Come to inspire and to be inspired!

Sacrifice the Sacred Cow presented by Syd Brinkman

Want new ideas on enlivening women's ministries and women's study groups in your congregations? Bring your ideas to share about a new goal, a new process, and together we can put that tired sacred cow out to pasture!

Forming and Transforming Our Lives with Spiritual Practices
presented by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell

If local congregations are communities whose identity is in the transforming power of the gospel, how do congregations and individuals within them go about nurturing ongoing formation? This workshop will provide participants with exposure to the potential of personal and communal spiritual practices. Such practices sustain unfolding formation of both inner and outer journeys. Attention will be given to an understanding of five fundamentals of all spiritual practices, examples of a wide variety of spiritual practices, an articulation of what these practices support and make possible, and resources for continued exploration of and education around spiritual practices.

Resilience and Joy Over the Long Haul: Spiritual Practices in Ministry
presented by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell

Ministry is not for the faint of heart. Most of the tasks of ministry are never finished. The challenges clergy face require everything we can muster. Burnout, compassion exhaustion, and despair come our way. Spiritual practices are one of the greatest strengths we can offer ourselves to increase our awareness and our care. Together we will pause to consider how our practices might be renewed over the long haul for the lives of resilience and joy to which we are called.

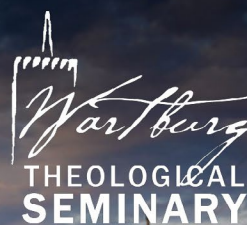
Responsible Conversations: Safe Place/Difficult Topics presented by Rev. Dr. James Childs

The structure and dynamics of dialog as a way to responsible and respectful conversation, in contrast to the threatening nature of argumentative debate, will be a central focus. In addition, we will look at the importance of trained lay leadership, the critical importance of asking the right questions, biblical resources, and framing the context with prayer and the bonds of baptismal unity. Introduction to available resources, and an opportunity for participants to share concerns and experiences will also be important. Participants will be able to take away a strategy for implementing responsible and honest conversations on tough subjects, an introduction to available resources, and ideas for grounding challenging conversations in the shared faith life of the congregation as the foundation for mutual acceptance.

Cross-training Leaders for Service in Rural Churches and Communities
presented by Rev. John Paulson

Rural congregations and communities are nearly always stretched to find and develop good leaders. What can the church do to help? How might the church be helped by others in the community? This workshop will help participants use Martin Luther's theology of the cross and his teachings on vocation to encourage and support church members in their involvement in both the church and the wider community, thereby enriching leadership in both.

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2016 Leaders and Speakers



Keynote Speaker: Rev. Elizabeth Dilley

Rev. Elizabeth Dilley serves as Minister for Ministers in Local Churches on the Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) ministry team at the national offices of the United Church of Christ, where she partners with conferences and associations to uphold the covenants of mutual support and accountability with authorized ministers. She previously served for nine years at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Red Oak – a small, thriving, Open and Affirming congregation in rural Iowa. She received her M.Div. from Pacific School of Religion and her B.S. in Educational Theatre from New York University. Elizabeth and her spouse, Paul Richardson, have a preschool-aged daughter and they are the humans to two (crazy) dogs.



Keynote Speaker: The Rev. James M. Childs, Jr., PhD

The Rev. James M. Childs, Jr., PhD is Joseph A. Sittler Professor of Theology and Ethics, Emeritus at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. For twenty-two of his thirty-five years at Trinity he served as Academic Dean. From 2002 -2005 he served in the capacity of Director for ELCA Studies on Sexuality. Throughout his forty-nine years in ordained ministry, Dr. Childs has served in some twenty-seven different appointed or elected avenues of synodical or churchwide service. He is past chair of the Board of the former Division for Church and Society of the ELCA. Dr. Childs is the author of over forty journal articles and has contributed chapters to eight different books.

Bible Study Leader: Samuel D. Giere

Samuel D. Giere (PhD, Old Testament, University of St. Andrews) serves as Associate Professor of Homiletics & Biblical interpretation at Wartburg Theological Seminary. A '97 graduate of Wartburg Seminary and an ordained pastor in the ELCA, he grew up in rural Northwestern Minnesota along the border with Manitoba. His teaching and research are in the areas of the theology of Christian proclamation, biblical theology, hermeneutics, the witness to Jesus Christ in a pluralistic world, and bible and film. Dr. Giere serves as co-editor of *Currents in Theology & Mission* and on the Steering Committee of the ELCA/ELCIC Association of Teaching Theologians. Please feel free to check out a project that he has been working on — whearstohear.org — a web-based resource intended to help orient the ear of the listener to the Gospel.

Workshop Leader: Syd Brinkman

Syd Brinkman lives in Allison IA with husband Randy. She is a self-employed hairdresser and a cradle to grave Lutheran who has been active in the church through Women of the ELCA and the Northeastern Iowa Synod serving locally, synodically and within the church-wide organization.

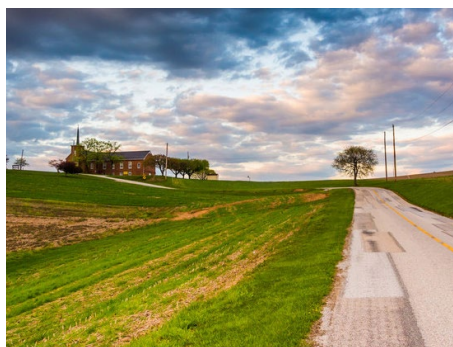
Workshop Leader: Reverend Doctor Martha Brunell

Reverend Doctor Martha Brunell is an experienced pastor in the United Church of Christ, spiritual director, retreat and workshop leader, and writer. Over the course of her ministry she also co-founded a domestic violence agency, served as a hospice chaplain, wrote curriculum, and taught adjunct at Eden Seminary and Aquinas Institute of Theology in Saint Louis. She is currently the pastor of Mayfield Congregational UCC in Sycamore, IL, has an active spiritual direction practice, and leads a number of retreats and workshops across several states.

Workshop Leader: Rev. John Paulson

Rev. John Paulson spent his early years on a farm in Northwest Minnesota and has spent most of his life in rural communities. His first career was in radio and television broadcasting, where he learned valuable lessons about encouraging (and discouraging) leadership. He received a Master of Arts Degree from Wartburg Seminary in 1985, an M.Div. from Luther-Northwestern (before the name change) in 1993, and a D.Min. from Luther in 2007. He has been involved in community development from the very beginning of his parish ministry career, including his internship in inner-city Jersey City, NJ. John lives in Wessington Springs, SD, a county-seat community of 950, with his wife Holly and four children, ages 12 to 19.

**Learn more and register online at
www.ruralministry.com**



35th Annual Rural Ministry Conference



EVENT REGISTRATION FORM | March 6 - 8, 2016

Life Changing Ministry in the Small Membership Congregation

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ Email _____

Confirmations will be sent electronically, if email is provided.

Church Name _____ Denomination _____

I would like Continuing Education Credits ☐ YES ☐ NO *One continuing education credit is available.*

☐ *Please check here if you are traveling to Dubuque by plane and need transportation between your accommodations and the conference.*

Workshops

Please choose your top three workshops:

____ **"Two Minute Testimony"**

____ **"Sacrifice the Sacred Cow"**

____ **"Forming & Transforming Our Lives With Spiritual Practice"**

____ **"Resilience & Joy Over the Long Haul: Spiritual Practices in Ministry"**

____ **"Responsible Conversations: Safe Place/Difficult Topics"**

____ **"Cross Training Leaders for Service in Rural Churches & Communities"**

Registration Fees

(Conference fees include lunches and dinners)

Early Bird fees: (due by February 8, 2016): \$ _____

1st person - \$170, 2 people or more - \$150/person

Standard fees: (due by February 29, 2016): \$ _____

1st person - \$185, 2 people or more - \$165/person

Monday Afternoon Workshops Only: \$ _____

\$50/per person

SAVE \$50! \$ _____

Subtract \$50 from total if you have been serving in a rural congregation for less than 5 years.

Total: \$ _____

For group rates copy form, complete and mail together. Return forms for early bird registration by Feb. 8, 2016. Standard registration is due by Feb. 29, 2016. Cancellations made after March 1 may receive only partial refunds.

Please note: In order to emphasize the importance of informal discussion and fellowship during mealtimes, the cost of registration and meals has been combined.

Special meal needs: _____

Method of payment: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Cardholder Signature _____ Cardholder Address _____

Mail registration and payment to:

Center for Theology & Land
333 Wartburg Place
Dubuque, IA 52003

Please make checks payable to Center for Theology & Land

Or, register and pay online at www.ruralministry.com