

## Church Leadership School July 29, 2017

One might ask why on earth would someone get up early on a Saturday morning, drive sometimes 100 miles or more and spend most of the day in classes two Saturdays each month for 9 months of the year, drive home, study between classes, and repeat this process for 2 years? Our students tell us it's simply because they have been called to do it. They are indeed a special group with a special calling.

The Church Leadership School of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina is pleased to announce the graduation of four individuals in 2017:

Ms. Millie Bruns (Kenilworth)

Ms. Reba Craft (Cherryville First)

Mr. Larry Cunningham (Davidson – Salem Presbytery)

Ms. Mimi Sloop (Crossnore)

They join over 100 other graduates of our program since its inception 16 years ago who continue to serve the Lord throughout our Presbytery as Commissioned Lay Pastors and Church Leaders.

The Church Leadership School is directed by the Commissioned Lay Pastors Sub-committee of the Presbytery Committee on Ministry to educate, train, and commission leaders for the churches in our Presbytery.

This year we have made great strides in bringing our school into the “information age” with improved on-line communication and recorded class sessions to provide more opportunity for review and participation for our students.

Our students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and life experiences. Men, women, young people, and those more “seasoned” in their faith journey all come together at our school to learn not only from our faculty, but also from each other.

To keep tuition costs low (currently just \$75/term, books included) we depend on an all-volunteer staff to manage and teach our students. Our faculty draws from a rich pool of knowledge from within our Presbytery – retired seminary professors, pastors of local congregations, and former graduates who have served our Presbytery in many capacities.

Unlike many similar programs in other Presbyteries, we do not require a minimum level of education or church leadership to participate in our program. We feel that the Holy Spirit will guide people to us who have been called to use their spiritual gifts. The mission of our school is to add skills and depth of knowledge to those gifts so that the churches they lead are enriched and strengthened in their service.

We do ask that our students' home churches express support of their commitment by expressing endorsement by their Session. There is no better forum for developing leaders than a nurturing environment where it's OK to “fail your way to success.” For that reason, we ask that each church in our Presbytery help identify people in their church who would enjoy and benefit from our program, realizing that the church itself is also a benefactor in the process.