



THRIVING

Leadership Formation



2023-2024
NW Washington
Synod Report



What is Thriving Leadership Formation?

Thriving Leadership Formation is a grant funded program based out of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and California Lutheran University.

The Lilly Endowment, Inc. funded this \$1,000,000 grant request in 2018 as part of their Thriving in Ministry grant. The initiative aims to help pastors thrive in congregational leadership and, in doing so, enhance the vitality of the congregations they serve.

Our grant request focused on both rostered leaders and lay leaders.

This grant was a collaboration with the Synods/Bishops in Regions 1 and 2. We take that collaboration seriously and want to use this money to benefit rostered and lay leaders in the West.



Meet Our Team



AMANDA NAMBA

PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Amanda is a double alum of Cal Lutheran, completing both her undergraduate and graduate work in Public Policy and Administration at the University. Over the past 2 decades, Amanda has worked in several roles at CLU, most recently, serving in the Mission & Identity Division.



NICOLETTE ROHR

COHORT GROUP COORDINATOR

Nicolette served as the Lay Leader Cohort Leader in the first year of Thriving Leadership Formation and has served as Vice President of Pacifica Synod. Professionally, Nicolette holds a Ph.D. in History and M.A. in Public History from the University of California, Riverside.



DESTA GOEHNER

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, THRIVING LEADERSHIP FORMATION

In addition to her role with TLF, Desta is also a Spiritual Director. Desta has served for over 25 years in Lutheran outdoor ministry, congregational youth ministry and served on the staff of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA. Desta also is an alum of California Lutheran University.



RAY PICKETT

RECTOR AT PLTS

Ray is the Rector of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminar and a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He has been a professor of New Testament for more than 20 years. He came to PLTS from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where he was professor of New Testament. As a pastor he served congregations in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Manhattan, Kansas.



Executive Summary

TLF has been a gathering of leaders in ELCA Regions 1 and 2. These leaders are trained to lead Cohort Groups, filled with rostered and lay leaders, to journey together in community using spiritual practices to ground their time together. Because of the pandemic and recent staff changes, other plans related to the original grant request were put on hold and we hope to roll those out in the next 1-2 years.

Staffing Changes

The grant was co-written by Desta Goehner, then Director of Congregational Relations at Cal Lutheran and the Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett, Rector at PLTS in 2017. In January 2023, the position of Director of Congregational Relations was eliminated at Cal Lutheran and Desta was transferred in February 2023 to a newly created position at PLTS, Director of Seminary Relations and Leadership Formation. In March 2024, the new position of Director of Seminary Relations and Leadership Formation was eliminated. Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett received approval from Lilly, the grant funder, for a budget revision to include a position to oversee the grant program. Desta is now in a grant funded, 11 month contract position as the Program Director of Thriving Leadership Formation.

2023 Events & Opportunities



The People's Sermon -

Revitalizing the lay preaching
in your congregation

Cohort 3: 18 lay leaders and 4
rostered pastors from 4
different congregations

Cohorts 4 and 5 (ran
simultaneously): 7 Rostered
Pastors and 19 Lay Leaders

Led by: Dr. Shauna Hannan

37 pastoral
leaders started
meeting with a
TLF **Spiritual
Director or
Coach** through
our program

First Call Retreat

2 1/2 day retreat at
**San Damiano Retreat
Center** in Danville, CA led by
Desta Goehner and Antoine
Cummins.

23 Rostered Pastors, **2**
Deacons, **5** Bishops, **3** Lay
Leaders gathered from
through Region 2.

Executive Skills for Church Leaders

Held in early January 2023 at
Spirit in the Desert, in
Carefree, AZ.

13 Rostered Leaders attended

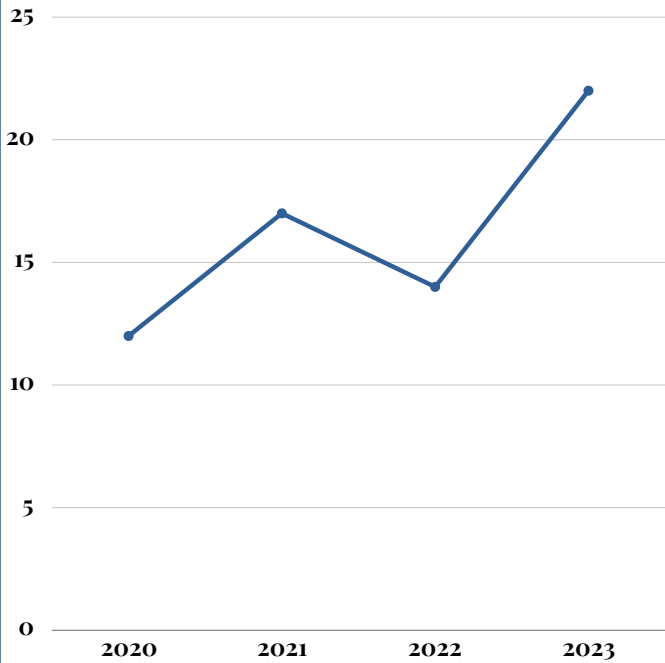
22 Cohorts

Journeying Together

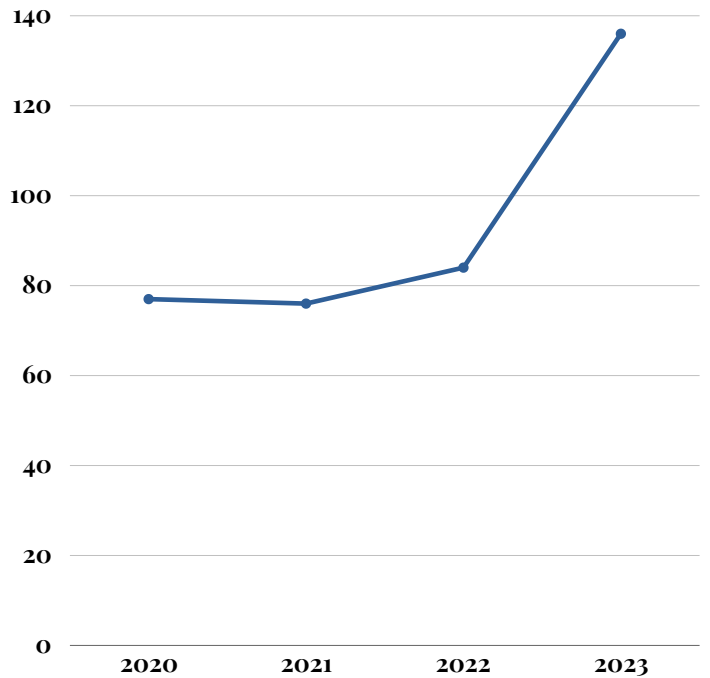
Spiritual Practices in Community

An online event -- a time to come together to rest in
a variety of grounding, experiential practices
to connect to God and each other.

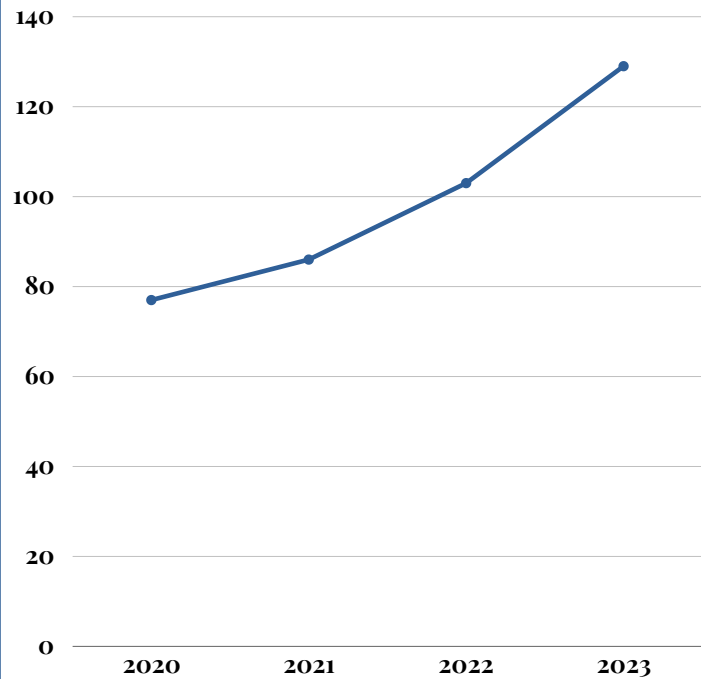
Program Growth



Number of Cohorts



Number of pastoral participants*



Number of congregations represented in cohorts

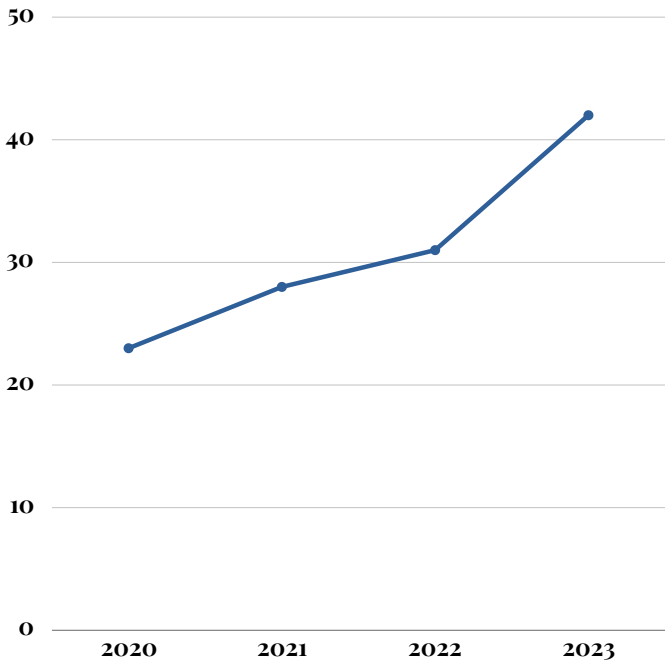
Total to Date

42 Number of Cohorts

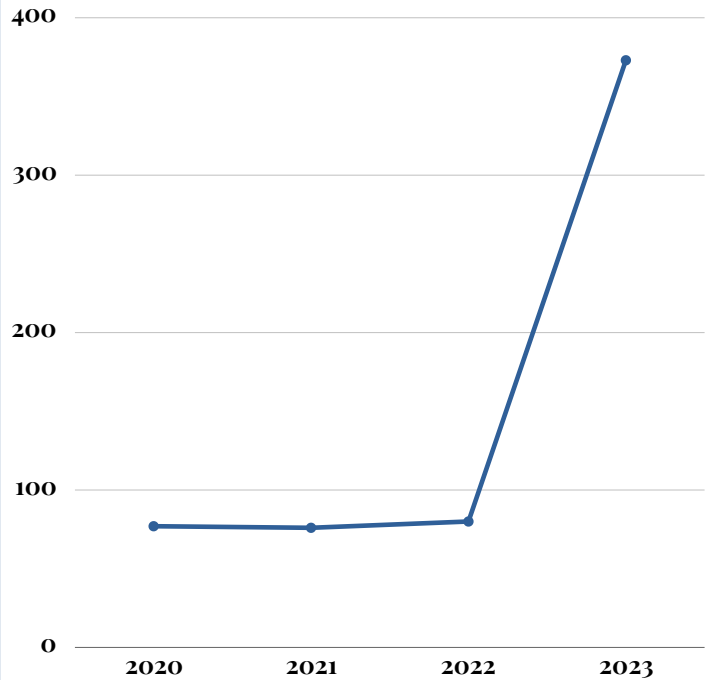
237 Number of pastoral participants

266 Number of congregations represented in cohorts

Other Learning & Training Events



Number of Events by Year



Number of pastoral participants* in events

Total to Date

124 Number of Events conducted by the project

606 Number of pastoral participants in all events



Current Financials

We currently have just under **\$500,000** remaining in our grant funds. With limitations due to Covid, and in-person retreats temporarily paused, we have more money remaining than we anticipated. We have applied for a grant extension with the Lilly Foundation, and plan to hear the approval in late Summer 2024.

Intentional Language

Moving forward, in our grant work, we will be moving our language from rostered leaders and lay leaders to pastoral leaders (incorporating both). We recognize some lay people wake up thinking about the Church and their ministry and want our language to reflect this.

Future Plans

The grant is currently set to end in Sept. 2024. We have applied for a grant extension and will hear a response sometime in June. All of our future plans depend on this decision.

Sustainability

We have been invited to apply for a \$500,000 Sustainability Grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. to continue the work for TLF. We are looking for people, synods and other organizations who want to partner in this ministry to make it sustainable. If you have ideas for who we might partner with to continue this important work, please let us know.

We'd love to connect



desta@plts.edu



www.thrivingleadershipformation.org



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instagram.com/thriving_leadership_formation

Want to learn more?

**Scan this QR code to get
access to:**

TLF 2023 Annual Grant Report
2023 Evaluations and Feedback
Link to our Leader Manual

Viewing this on a computer or phone?

[Click this link to be taken to the drive](#)

