



The Local Church Training Institute

Built for pastors who actually do the work

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Built for Pastors Who Actually Do the Work

Purpose

The Local Church Training Institute exists to equip pastors and church leaders for real ministry. We offer writing-based, self-paced theological training rooted in the life of the local church. All courses are doctrinally sound, practically driven, and convictionally Baptist.

Audience

Men who are currently serving in the local church as pastors, lay elders, or ministry leaders.

Doctrine

We affirm the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith. Students from other traditions are welcome, but should be prepared to engage with Baptist theology throughout their studies.

Programs Offered

- Bachelor of Arts in Local Church Ministry
- Master of Arts in Local Church Ministry
- Doctor of Local Church Ministry
- Doctor of Preaching in the Local Church

Each program is self-paced, and all course assignments are listed clearly in their respective course sheets.

Cost

There is no tuition. A one-time \$125 graduation fee covers the printing and shipping of a physical diploma.

How It Works

All assignments are submitted via email in Google Docs or Word format. Completed coursework is reviewed and feedback is given. Upon completion, students are eligible to graduate and will receive a diploma by mail.

Application

Apply via Google Form (link available on our website).

Contact

Email: localchurchinstitute@gmail.com

Website: westparkozark.org (see Institute tab)

Bachelor of Arts in Local Church Ministry

Delivery Format: Self-paced, local church-anchored

Structure: Practical ministry assignments, essays, plans, and sermon/teaching recordings.

General Requirements

- 6 Preaching Videos (30-60 minutes each)
- 4 Teaching Videos (30+ minutes each)
- Discipleship Plan: A strategy for discipling members with a visual chart. Should define stages, tools, and a pathway for spiritual growth.
- Sunday School/Small Group Plan: Describe class structure, curriculum, teacher training, and integration with church discipleship.
- Church Constitution and Bylaws: Full working document covering doctrine, leadership, membership, discipline, and governance.
- One-Year Operating Budget: Detailed budget showing income, expenses, and categories.
- Annual Ministry Calendar: 12-month calendar with explanation of events and strategy.
- Church Leadership Structure: Visual flowchart + 300-word description of leadership roles.
- Ministry Philosophy Papers (3 total): Philosophy of Ministry, Preaching, and Counseling or Discipleship.

Section 1 – Bible & Theology

- Old Testament Storyline Essay (3000-5000 word): Summarize the major events, people, and redemptive themes of Genesis–Malachi.
- New Testament Storyline Essay (3000-5000 words): Overview of the Gospels through Revelation with emphasis on Christ and the church.
- Teaching Video: Major Themes of the Old Testament (30-60 minutes).
- Teaching Video: Mission of the New Testament Church (30-60 minutes).
- Church History Essay (3000-5000 words): Key events from Acts through the modern

era, with a focus on persecution, creeds, and revival.

- Baptist(or your denominational identity) Distinctives Essay (3000-5000 words): Core doctrines, polity, ordinances, and history of Baptists(or your denominational group).

- Ethics/Apologetics Essay (2,000 words) essay on Christian ethics or apologetics to address contemporary issues (e.g., cultural engagement, moral dilemmas).

Section 2 – Preaching & Pastoral Ministry

- watch/listen to 25 sermons of your choice (30-60 minutes) and write a 500 word assessment/summary of the sermon. Address the style of preaching (topical, expository, textual, etc.), the faithfulness to the biblical text, style, major themes developed. Summarize the sermon first and then assess.

- 4 Preaching Videos (30-60 minutes each): 2 NT expository, 1 OT expository, 1 topical.

- Sermon Manuscripts (1,200–1,800 words each): Full text of each sermon.

- 6-Month Preaching Calendar: Chart outlining weekly sermon texts/themes.

- Philosophy of Preaching Paper (2000-3000 words): Purpose of preaching, expository method, theological emphasis.

- Pastoral Shepherding Essay (2000-3000 words): Explains biblical care, visitation, discipline, and presence as a shepherd-leader.

- Reflection Paper: Preaching When Spiritually Dry (1,000–2000 words): Discuss seasons of dryness and how to remain faithful.

Section 3 – Counseling & Discipleship

- Philosophy of Discipleship Paper (2000 words): Biblical model and how it applies to the church today.

- Philosophy of Biblical Counseling Paper (2000 words): Explains sufficiency of Scripture and approach to counseling issues.

- Discipleship Plan Document (2,000 words): Stages of maturity, methods, and mentoring tools. Visual diagram included.

- Sunday School/Small Group Plan: See General Requirements.

- Teaching Video: Biblical Counseling and the Local Church (30-60 minutes).

Section 4 – Church Leadership & Administration

- Constitution & Bylaws: Working document reflecting biblical polity.

- Statement of Faith: See General Requirements.

- One-Year Operating Budget: Detailed, realistic financial plan.

- 3-Year Ministry Plan (1,500–2,000 words): Strategic vision for growth, outreach, and discipleship.

- Essay: Denominational/Associational Cooperation (1,500-3000 words): How to work within associations without compromising identity.

- Teaching Video: Worship Service Structure (30+ minutes).

- Philosophy of Church Leadership/Revitalization (1,500-3000 words): Approach to leadership, decision-making, and renewal.

Section 5 – Missions & Outreach

- Local Missions Strategy Plan (1,500–2,000 words): Outreach ideas, biblical motivation, and plan for churchwide participation.
- Event Plan (750–1,000 words): Sample event with schedule, purpose, volunteers, and follow-up strategy.
- Outreach Training Video (20-30 minutes): Equips members to reach their community. Use the event outlined in event plan assignment. Train people for that specific event.
- Essay: Theological Rationale for Missions (2000–3,500 words): How and why churches must send and serve.
- Promotional Materials: 1 flyer and 1 social/digital sample (graphics, potential social media posts, emails, etc.).

Personal Systematic Theology (Capstone Assignment)

Each student must produce a written, Scripture-supported, personal statement of systematic theology that expresses and defends their doctrinal beliefs. This paper should be clear, pastoral in tone, biblically rooted, and appropriate for use in long-term ministry contexts.

Total Length: 7,500–10,000 words (750–1,000 words per section). Scripture references required throughout (not written out in full).

Sections to Include:

1. Bibliology – Doctrine of Scripture: Inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, clarity.
2. Theology Proper – Doctrine of God: God's existence, attributes, Trinity, and providence.
3. Christology – Doctrine of Christ: Deity, humanity, atonement, resurrection, and return.
4. Pneumatology – Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Personhood, indwelling, gifts, sanctification.
5. Anthropology – Doctrine of Man: Creation, image of God, purpose, nature of man.
6. Hamartiology – Doctrine of Sin: Origin, nature, scope, and consequences of sin.
7. Soteriology – Doctrine of Salvation: Election, regeneration, justification, sanctification, perseverance.
8. Ecclesiology – Doctrine of the Church: Nature, marks, ordinances, offices, mission.

9. Eschatology – Doctrine of Last Things: Death, judgment, heaven, hell, and millennial views.

10. Angelology – Doctrine of Angels and Demons: Nature, role, Satan, and spiritual warfare.

General Instructions for all assignments:

12 point font, docx or Google docs format

All assignments must be thoroughly biblically supported. Do not type out full verse unless quotation is absolutely necessary. Otherwise put reference in parentheses at the end of sentence/paragraph

These assignments are not just personal even though they all focus on local church context. Outside sources are necessary and should be cited with basic footnotes and bibliography entries. Support your positions and statements biblically and with outside sources where appropriate.

All video assignments can either be posted to Youtube (or similar site) and link shared with professor, or can be sent directly through file sharing/email

Master of Arts in Local Church Ministry (MA-LCM)

Program Type: Thesis and Portfolio-Based

Length: 12–24 months, self-paced

Delivery Format: Remote and local church-anchored

Purpose

The MA in Local Church Ministry is designed for pastors, biblical counselors, and ministry leaders who want to demonstrate mastery in applied theology, preaching, leadership, and biblical counseling. This program replaces traditional coursework with actual ministry output and a full thesis project in the student's area of emphasis.

Admission Requirements

- A bachelor's degree or ministry experience equivalent
- Active involvement in local church leadership

Required Ministry Portfolio

A. Sermon Recordings

10 sermons:

- 4 New Testament expository messages/teaching sessions
- 4 Old Testament expository message/teaching sessions
- 2 topical messages/teaching sessions

Each must include a manuscript and a brief self-assessment.

(If student is not the primary preacher at their church accommodation can be made for other preaching teaching settings. This could include teaching classes. However, sermons could be recorded without a congregation if you do not preach regularly in your church's ministry.)

B. Administrative Documents

- Church Constitution and Bylaws
- Church Statement of Faith/Doctrinal Statement
- One-year operating budget
- 1–3 year ministry strategy plan (1500-2500 words)

C. Ministry Philosophy Papers

- Philosophy of Ministry (2,000 words)
 - Philosophy of Preaching (2,000 words)
 - Philosophy of Discipleship (2,000 words)
- (Biblical counselors may submit a Philosophy of Counseling paper instead.)

-Case Studies: Add 1–2 case studies (1,000 words each) in the portfolio, reflecting on real ministry challenges (e.g., conflict resolution, counseling scenario) to test applied theology.

Thesis Project

Length: 18,000–20,000 words

Supervision: Mentor assigned upon proposal approval

Requirements:

- Thesis proposal (1,000–1,500 words)
- Final written thesis with appropriate structure, footnotes, and bibliography
- Oral defense with panel of 3 professors/pastors via video or live session

Areas of Emphasis (Choose One)

- Expository Preaching and Homiletics
- Biblical Counseling in the Local Church
- Baptist Ecclesiology and Church Leadership
- Discipleship and Christian Formation

- Theology and Practice of Worship and Weekly Gathering
- Pastoral Administration and Strategy
- Church Revitalization
- Rural/Small Town Church Ministry
- (other options if approved by mentor)

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Doctor of Preaching in the Local Church (D.PLC)

This doctoral program is designed for seasoned pastors committed to the long-term health of the church through faithful preaching. Rather than focusing on academic research or classroom theory, the D.PLC emphasizes the lived practice of expository preaching in a local congregation over the course of one full year.

The program culminates in a full preaching calendar, sermon archive, and theological reflection demonstrating both doctrinal clarity and pastoral effectiveness.

1. Preaching Plan Submission & Approval, Preaching Research

Length: 1,500–2,000 words + calendar/chart

Submit a one-year plan for preaching through a book or series of books. Explain your rationale, lay out your week-by-week schedule, and account for special dates (holidays, missions, etc.). This plan must be approved before preaching begins.

-watch/listen to 50 sermons of your choice (30-60 minutes) and write a 500 word assessment/summary of the sermon. Address the style of preaching (topical, expository,

textual, etc.), the faithfulness to the biblical text, style, major themes developed. Summarize the sermon first and then assess.

2. Preaching Execution and Documentation

Required:

- At least 50 expository sermons over a 12-24 month period
- Video or audio recordings of each sermon
- Manuscripts or detailed sermon notes for each
- 300+ word weekly reflection/assessment after each sermon focusing on reception of sermon, areas for improvement, etc. These should all be formatted in the same way. List the Date, passage preached, location, sermon number in the series, and then the reflection/assessment.

3. Mid-Program Reflection Essay

Length: 2,000–3,000 words

Reflect on your progress halfway through the preaching calendar. Describe recurring themes, unanticipated challenges, spiritual lessons, and growth areas both personally and in your church.

4. Philosophy and Theology of Preaching Paper

Length: 4,000–5,000 words

Present your convictions about expository preaching: biblical foundations, Spirit-dependence, preaching Christ, objections to exposition, and a defense of your methodology in the local church setting.

5. Final Integration and Assessment: Personal and Congregational Impact

Length: 7,500–10,000 words

This final section serves as the capstone of the D.PLC. It is not simply a review but a pastoral integration of all that has been done, preached, learned, and endured over the course of a year of expository preaching.

Include:

- An introduction to your church. Setting, size, demographics, challenges, strengths, structure, etc.
- Include 5 sermons to look at more closely in this reflection. These need to be messages that had particular impact on you or your congregation. Discuss the sermon itself and assess the impact.
- Personal Assessment: Spiritual, emotional, and theological development through the year.

- Congregational Assessment: How the church responded to sustained exposition and what fruit was seen.
- Strategic Review: Practical evaluation of sermon planning, delivery, and pacing.
- Improvements and Next Steps: What would be changed or retained, and how future preaching will benefit.
- Final Word: A concluding charge or prayer that reflects your heart and calling as a preacher-shepherd.

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Doctor of Local Church Ministry (D.LCM)

This doctoral degree is a writing-only, pastorally rooted program designed for men actively serving in local church ministry. It synthesizes theological reflection, pastoral philosophy, and real-world strategy into a single, unified dissertation. The final document will consist of 12 sections, written over time, totaling approximately 55,000 words.

Each section should be thoroughly biblical, supported with sources, clearly written, and drawn from the student's actual church context. Student will meet with professor at least once every 2 months to check in on progress. After completing all assignments the student will have an oral defense with 3 pastors/professors conducted in person or online via Zoom.

1. Introduction of Ministry Context and Church History

Describe your church's history, demographics, challenges, and opportunities. Include your personal ministry background.

Length: 4,500 words

2. Pastoral Profile

Write an autobiography of a pastor. This can be a pastor that you know and interview or one from history that you research. Assess what you learn about pastoring, preaching, church ministry from the life of this pastor. Do not just write about facts and events in their life, but assess their pastoral work and theology.

Length: 4,500 words

3. Philosophy of Local Church Ministry

Explain your theological and practical convictions about the church, pastoral leadership, Scripture, membership, and mission. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

4. Leadership and Governance

Describe your church's leadership model, processes of decision-making, pastoral roles, deacon structure, discipline, and accountability. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

5. Preaching and Teaching Ministry

Detail your preaching philosophy, sermon planning, teacher development, and weekly rhythms for preaching and study. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

6. Biblical Counseling and Soul Care

Lay out your approach to counseling, common issues, confidentiality, and the integration with discipleship. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

7. Discipleship and Church Education

Present your plan for moving members from conversion to maturity, including Sunday School and structured growth. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

8. Worship and Weekly Services

Define your theology and practice of worship. Include how you order services and use Sunday/Wednesday gatherings. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

9. Outreach, Missions, and Community Presence

Explain how your church engages the community, supports missions, organizes events, and cooperates with other churches. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

10. Vision for the Next 5–10 Years

State your strategic plan for future ministry, including leadership development, facility use, and sustainable faithfulness. Integrate biblical support and theological reasoning for the positions taken.

Length: 4,500 words

11. Pastoral Ministry and Shepherding Practices

Describe your role in visitation, hospital care, intercession, funerals, and lifelong care for the flock.

Length: 4,500 words

12. Personal Ministry Growth Plan, Reflections, and Project Conclusion

Reflect on what you've learned through this process. Identify areas of needed personal growth and personal goals for the next decade.

Length: 4,500 words

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