

Metro DC Synod Mental Health and Self -Care Team Report

The Metro DC Synod Mental Health and Self-Care (MHSC) Team spent the 2020 Summer and Fall of brainstorming while planning relevant Leadership Academy programming to address church leadership topics.

The Co- Chairs, The Rev. Dr. Swenson-Reinhold and the Rev. Dr. Karis Graham worked alongside a planning team which included: Vicar Eric Randolph, Pastor Heidi Eickstadt, Ken VanDerHorst and Alyssa Prinzivalli.

The first Leadership Academy, Equipping Leaders for Grief and Self-Care was presented on May 21, 2020. The multiple pandemics exposed pastors, deacons, and church leaders to new and unexpected pressure points within ministry. Shepherding through this uncertainty was not easy resulting in mental, physical, and emotional tolls of the new normal that lead to exhaustion and even burnout. The topic of Self-care was a critical step to not only navigate a crisis but to live well. Rev. Dr. Karis Graham and Rev. Dr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold explored burn-out signals while offering resources and support for staying healthy in ministry.

The second Leadership Academy, The Body of Christ and Mental Illness: Suicide Prevention, was presented on October 22, 2020. The Rev. Dr. Karis Graham and Alyssa Prinzivalli discussed the anguish and isolation that Jesus experienced which is familiar to those that contemplate suicide. Resources were given to participants to help guide those struggling with mental illness and considering suicide.

A third Leadership Academy on Financial Wellness in January, 2021, was postponed due to an unforeseen circumstance and will be rescheduled.

Future possible MHSC presentations will address Mental Health and Addiction, Exercise and Spiritual Health and Living in our Original Houses: Our Body.

If you would like to become involved with MHSC Team, please contact Rev. Dr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold at erinsr@metrodcelca.org