

## Lutheran Vocation: Discernment & Calling in the Real World

Martin Lohrmann – [mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu)

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### I. Biblical Call Stories: Jeremiah 1:1-10 & Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

God sees & hears real world pain, commissioning people to address it

A pattern for biblical call stories:\*

1. Divine appearance: surprise!
2. Divine introduction
3. Divine call given
4. Personal objection!
5. Divine reassurance: “Do not be afraid.”
6. Divine sign promised

Other examples: Abraham (Gen. 15), Abraham’s Servant (Gen. 24), Moses (Ex. 3), Gideon (Judges 6), Samuel (1 Sam. 3), Isaiah (Is. 6 & 40:6-11), Paul (Acts 9), John (Rev. 1)

### II. God Talks Us into Service: Lutherans call this vocation

Vocation: meeting the real world in faith

This happens in families, friendships, jobs, church & community

God knows our real world situations & works through us for good

A pattern for discernment:

1. Pay attention to the world around us
2. Consider God’s word for that situation, i.e. read the Bible
3. Pray and reflect on the issue
4. Objections!?
5. Imagine possibilities, including with others
6. Walk in faith

In the time we have, let’s start to workshop this:

1. Consider an issue or situation in your life
2. Share it with a neighbor here
3. What word of God comes to mind?
4. What objections might you or others have?
5. What steps might you take to act in prayer and action?

### III. Come & See! A lifetime adventure in faith

John 1:35-42: “What are you looking for?”

We have many resources for the journey:

Through Holy Spirit: scripture, worship, community & prayer

Through others: mentors, teachers, pastors, seminaries & friends

Luther: *“This life, therefore, is not godliness but the process of becoming godly, not health but getting well, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way. The process is not yet finished, but it is actively going on. This is not the goal but it is the right road. At present, everything does not gleam and sparkle, but everything is being cleansed”* (LW 32:24).

### Questions, Objections (!?) & Conversation

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\* Norman Habel, “The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (1965), 297-323; online at <http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/habel.htm>.

**FREE online course for Grace Gathering participants!**  
*For people looking to continue discernment of God's call in their lives...*  
*For people in all stages and walks of life...*

**Lutheran Vocation: Discernment & Calling in the Real World**

Dr. Martin Lohrmann – Wartburg Theological Seminary

[mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu)

Begins late August 2016 (five weeks long)

**Description**

With so many voices competing for our attention, how do we learn to listen to the voice of God? In this course, we will cover key ideas from the Lutheran Reformers about vocation and we will sort through some of the leading voices competing for our attention in today's world: voices that stake a claim on who we should be, what we should value, and what makes us happy. The course will also invite participants to reflect on who they are as beloved children of God and how their daily work matters to the people around them.

**Objectives**

1. To consider God's calls to people in the Bible and to us
2. To discern the Holy Spirit's continuing work in the lives of the baptized
3. To connect faith with daily life in practical ways
4. To grow together in faith as a community of committed learners

**Methods**

Participants will participate in the following ways:

1. Read from the Bible and the Lutheran tradition
2. Write short personal reflections to share
3. Comment on colleagues' posts, building relationships with other learners
4. Develop a project for use in daily life

**Readings**

*The Holy Bible*

*The Small Catechism*, by Martin Luther

\*Martin Lohrmann, *Book of Harmony: Spirit and Service in the Lutheran Confessions* (Fortress, 2016); \*required for students earning a Continuing Education credit; optional for others.

Other essays will be posted online

**Topics**

Week 1: Mary's call & the needs of the world

Week 2: Gideon's call & God's guidance

Week 3: The call of Abraham's servant & the surprises of grace

Week 4: Isaiah's call & our objections

Week 5: Jesus calls disciples: "Come & see"

*This course includes Continuing Education credit for rostered leaders; discounted rates are available for church groups: <http://www.wartburgseminary.edu/gracegathering>.*