



2026

District Materials

TRAINING IN MINISTRY

(TRIM)

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership
615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374

Orientation
July 14-16, 2026 (Tuesday - Thursday)

Prospective Student Profile due by May 15, 2026
Student Application due by June 15, 2026

For more information, contact:
Tabitha Rudy
Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs
hartmta@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1810

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Training in Ministry (TRIM)

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me”.
Isaiah 6:8*

What is TRIM?

Training in Ministry (TRIM) is a ministry training program that provides the educational required for ordination in the Church of the Brethren. TRIM is a program of the Brethren Academy of Ministerial Leadership, which is a partnership of Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren. Most courses are taught online, which allows students to study close to home. TRIM students come to campus in Richmond, Indiana for their orientation and, if they choose the occasional onsite course. Depending on the extent of prior education, a student may complete TRIM in as few as three (3) years, but no more than ten (10) years.

All students enter TRIM with the approval and support of their district. District-appointed TRIM coordinators provide guidance and support to students at the local level. TRIM coursework consists of studies in bible, church history, theology, and practical ministry. Through coursework and a series of engagements with the life of the church, students gain knowledge and experience for ministry. TRIM partners well with the district licensing process for discerning the call to ministry.

Who Can Participate in TRIM?

Those committed to Jesus Christ and the church who:

- sense a call to ministry in the Church of the Brethren and are willing to explore that call
- have a high school diploma (or equivalent) and the ability to do college-level work
- wish to fulfill education requirements for ordination in the Church of the Brethren or upgrade previous training
- have gifts for ministry, discerned and affirmed by their congregation and district
- have the self-motivation to pursue a disciplined course of study for ministry

What are the differences between the old and new TRIM requirements?

TRIM requirements have recently been updated; however, some students are still under the older TRIM requirements. The biggest shift between the two requirements is that those taking TRIM under the new requirements no longer need to take general education courses, while those who

are taking TRIM under the pre-2023 updates still need to take general education courses. Additionally, there are now more required courses for those who are taking TRIM under the updated program requirements. These updates were made to better support the needs of students and to strengthen the ministry training experience.

All students beginning TRIM in 2023 and after are under the revised requirements. Students who entered TRIM prior to the 2023 revisions who benefitted from the changes to the requirements were given the chance to opt into the new requirements, so there may be some students who have been in the program for a few years already who are using the 2023 revised program requirements. Otherwise, students entering TRIM before 2023 are under the old requirements.

What Does TRIM Cost?

The total cost of the TRIM program will depend on the previous education of the student, the institution offering the courses, and the progress of the student through the program (i.e. how many courses the student chooses to take each year). Below are the various costs involved in the program.

- Enrollment Fee: \$360, due at the time of application
- Biannual Student Participation Fee: \$112.50
- Biannual District Participation Fee: \$122.50 per student
- Individual course Fee: \$300, payable at the time of course registration (courses taken outside the Brethren Academy will vary in cost)
- Cost of books and any travel to onsite courses (varies by course)

Biannual fees will be billed in January (due in full, March 1) and July (due in full, September 1), based on the students' date of completion.

Financial Assistance for course fees is available to qualifying students.

Whom do I contact about TRIM?

Tabitha Rudy,
Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership
hartmta@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1810

ADMISSIONS PROCESS FACT SHEET

Training In Ministry (TRIM)

*An intelligent heart acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
Proverbs 18:15*

*Graduation from TRIM meets the educational requirements for
ordination in the Church of the Brethren*

The admissions process into the TRIM program consists of the following steps:

- 1. Recommendation:** The district determines whether to recommend a person for TRIM. A high school diploma (or equivalent) is a prerequisite for entrance into the TRIM program. The ideal student is someone who is considering ministry and moving through the licensing process.
- 2. Prospective Student Profile:** The district executive/minister completes the *Prospective Student Profile* and sends it to the Brethren Academy office by May 15, 2026. The entrance process includes a background check, initiated by the district through the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry.
- 3. Student Application:** The Brethren Academy sends a TRIM application to the prospective student, who will complete and return it with the enrollment fee of \$360 to the Brethren Academy by June 15, 2026 (districts differ on who pays the enrollment fee). This application is required to participate in orientation.
- 4. Orientation:** Upon acceptance into the program, the student attends Orientation and takes an eight-week online course which begins during Orientation. Typically, Orientation takes place at Bethany Theological Seminary, however the Brethren Academy may decide to move Orientation entirely online in extenuating circumstances (i.e. weather, travel issues, etc.). If Orientation is at Bethany, the student is responsible for travel expenses to and from Richmond, Indiana and for books required for the course. Lodging, meals, and materials needed during Orientation are paid for by the Brethren Academy.

**The 2026 Orientation is
July 14-16, 2026 (Tuesday - Thursday)**

Students whose registration process is completed before April 1, 2026 may take up to two courses before orientation in consultation with Tabitha Rudy.

For more information, contact:

Tabitha Rudy

Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs

hartmta@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1810

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS FOR Training In Ministry (TRIM)

*Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind,
so that you may discern what is the will of God—
what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Romans 12:2.*

TRIM students complete the following requirements, in conversation with their District TRIM Coordinator:

1. Attend a three-day orientation in which the student receives a detailed explanation of the TRIM program, begins an eight-week online course, and meets other students and church leaders.
2. Participate in a district-based group of ministry training students or a pastoral/collegial support group. This is coordinated through the district or through local networks.
3. Complete 20 units of coursework, at least 10 of which need to be completed while in TRIM.

Required coursework includes:

10 units of Biblical/Historical/Theological Studies, including

- Introduction to Biblical Studies*
- Introduction to Hebrew Bible
- Introduction to New Testament
- 2 Church of the Brethren courses* (History, or Polity, or Beliefs & Practices)

10 units of Ministry Studies

- Practical Ministry Colloquium*
- Leadership and Administration*
- At least one course in Preaching, Worship and Rituals, or Pastoral Care
- At least one course in Church Vitality and Evangelism or
Spiritual Formation/Teaching or Learning in the Church

*Must be taken from a Brethren perspective (TRIM, Bethany Theological Seminary, or ACTS)

4. Complete **Five (5) Required Experiences while in TRIM:**
 - a) Annual Conference Experience
 - b) District Conference Experience
 - c) Church of the Brethren Denominational Experience
 - d) Bethany Theological Seminary Experience (beyond orientation)
 - e) Ecumenical, Intercultural or Interfaith Experience
5. Complete a **Supervised Ministry Internship (400 hours) while in TRIM.**

6. Graduation: Following an **exit exam and final evaluations**, students are recognized with a certificate at their district conference (or another district-wide event) and are recognized at the Bethany/Brethren Academy Luncheon during the Annual Conference.

7. Financial Commitments:

- Enrollment Fee: \$360, due at the time of application
- Biannual Student Participation Fee: \$112.50, billed in January and July
- Biannual District Participation Fee: \$122.50 per student, billed in January and July
- Brethren Academy Course Fee: \$300 per class
- Cost of books and any travel for onsite courses (varies by class)

Financial Assistance for course fees is available to qualifying students.

More detailed information can be found in the 2026 TRIM manual online.

For more information, contact:

Tabitha Rudy,
Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs
hartmta@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1810

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE/MINISTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Training In Ministry (TRIM)

Preliminary Responsibilities

1. Educate your district ministry commission regarding the various opportunities for ministry training, including TRIM, in the Church of the Brethren and help to interpret the theological and biblical foundation for such training.
2. When identifying candidates for TRIM, consult with your district leadership to secure district backing for involvement in the program, including budgeting district support for each TRIM student. The biannual fee per student, paid by the district, is \$122.50 (\$245 a year), to be invoiced in January and July.
3. Submit a *Prospective Student Profile* for each eligible candidate to the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.
4. Secure a qualified, seminary-trained person to serve as the district TRIM coordinator or intentionally renew the arrangement with the current district TRIM coordinator. Encourage the district ministry commission to clarify how the district will handle the matter of district TRIM coordinator expenses.
5. In the event of an interim between district TRIM coordinators all district TRIM coordinator responsibilities will go through and rest with the district executive/minister.

Responsibilities After Admission to Program

1. Determine the way in which the district TRIM coordinator will communicate with the commission regarding TRIM student progress.
2. Ensure the availability of a district-based group of ministry training students or a pastoral/collegial support group.
3. Be in contact with the Brethren Academy office for any questions or comments regarding the district TRIM coordinator's leadership and/or student progress.
4. Work with the district TRIM coordinator in securing appropriate placement for meeting the TRIM requirement of a supervised ministry internship (i.e. find second-staff, interims or other suitable opportunities for pastoral ministry that may be supervised).
5. Work with the district TRIM coordinator to recognize graduating TRIM students, typically during District Conference, or another district-wide event.

DISTRICT TRIM COORDINATOR

Position Description

New district TRIM coordinators are **trained** for their position by the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs.

Qualifications for District TRIM Coordinator include:

- significant experience in ministry or in other leadership in the church
- well-grounded in the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren
- has a heart for the future leadership of the church
- an encourager who is willing to be reflective and honest with students
- excellent communication skills, including online communication
- has the time to spend with students and to complete necessary paperwork
- willing to guide students toward the strengthening of their faith while leaving the exact shape that faith might take to God

Activities may vary by district, but in general include:

- advising students on coursework and other TRIM requirements
- reviewing and signing the following paperwork
 - Learning Covenant
 - Supervised Ministry Internship Covenant
 - Supervised Ministry Internship Final Evaluations (student and supervisor)
 - Leave of Absence Request
 - Final Self-Evaluation from student
- contacting students occasionally to maintain a good relationship
- keeping the district leadership up to date on the progress of students
- conferring with the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs
- attending periodic district TRIM coordinator gatherings (online or at Annual Conference)

In most districts the District TRIM Coordinator is a **volunteer position**; however, we hope that any expenses are covered either by the district or a supporting congregation. This arrangement is made between the District TRIM Coordinator and the district.

The District TRIM Coordinator does a considerable amount for a volunteer position. We trust that one of the benefits for the District TRIM Coordinator is the satisfaction of knowing that they are mentoring those who have responded to God's call. Additionally, each year, District TRIM Coordinators may choose to take one course offered by the Brethren Academy and pay for only books and any travel or lodging that may be involved. For those who are ordained, this will earn two CEUs.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT PROFILE

Training In Ministry (TRIM)

A Program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

To be completed by the district executive/minister

1. Name of Student _____

2. Address _____

3. Phone _____ E-mail _____

4. Congregation _____ District _____

5. Ministerial status: ___pre-licensed ___licensed other _____

6. District TRIM Coordinator (Check one):

___ Will be (supply name) _____

___ Is not yet appointed, but we have one or more prospects.

7. Previous training beyond high school (entering students must have a high school diploma or equivalent)

8. Present employment status _____

9. The person described above (*Check each item that applies*):

- ___ Has a confirmed call to ministry, supported by the district.
- ___ Has been in contact with the district and is interested in TRIM.
- ___ Has the ability to do college-level work.
- ___ Is computer literate.
- ___ Could conceivably do masters-level/seminary work.
- ___ Needs TRIM to complete educational requirements for ordination.
- ___ Is already ordained but would profit from additional training.

10. The applicant submitted a completed Criminal Background check to our office on _____ (date of submission). **District executive's initials required** _____.

If the applicant has not had a Criminal Background check within the past three years, he/she will need to complete one before entering TRIM. Background checks are initiated by the district through the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry.

11. The undersigned agrees the district will pay the yearly TRIM fee for this student.

Signature of district executive/minister

Date

Save The Completed Form, Then Send by May 15, 2026 to:

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership,

615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374, or academy@bethanyseminary.edu