**HISTORY OF VIA DE CRISTO**

Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) is the Lutheran expression of [Cursillo](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cursillo), a Christian spiritual renewal and leadership development originally developed in Spain in 1944 by the Roman Catholic Church. The national structure for Via de Cristo is called [National Lutheran Secretariat](https://viadecristo.org/).

* 1950s: Cursillo came to the United States
* 1960s/1970s: Cursillo was adapted by several Protestant denominations
* 1970s: Lutheran Cursillo began to emerge in Florida and Iowa as ecumenical movements
* 1979: LVCCM was organized
	+ *LVCCM is an ecumenical community based in the Tri-City area of Michigan, with participation by Lutherans from both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), as well as Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Reformed, Catholic, Assembly of God, Church of God, and many other churches and denominations*
* 1980: LVCCM held its first pair of weekends in Midland, MI
* 1980s: Most Lutheran communities that were ecumenical in nature were renamed Via de Cristo
* 1999: LVCCM celebrated its 20th year of organization and 50th pair of weekends
* 2023: LVCCM hosting weekends #96 and #97

The Cursillo method includes three distinct phases:

* **PREWEEKEND***:* Christians who are, or have the potential to be leaders are recruited by sponsors to be candidates on a weekend; a team of laity and clergy is selected and trained to serve on the weekend
* **WEEKEND:**team members present a 3-day weekend retreat to the candidates, consisting of 14 talks on basic Christian principles. Each talk is followed by small-group discussion and sharing. Special activities, worship and singing throughout the weekend emphasize the major themes of God's love, His gift of grace through Christ, and our response to God through piety, study and action.
* **POST WEEKEND:** members of the LVCCM community actively return to their churches, participate in accountability groups *(called reunion groups)* and monthly community gatherings *(called ultreyas)*