Teaching Parish Reference Book 2012-2013

Maria Erling

Table of Contents

I. Introduction to Integrative Seminar One

Syllabus 3
Schedule for Integrative Seminar and Teaching Parish 4

II. Audits
Communication 11
Relationship
Outreach

III. The Teaching Parish
Description 20
Teaching Parish and the Diaconal Ministry Candidate 24
Abbreviated Calendar 26
Resources for Mentor Conferences/Student Dialogue
for Teaching and Preaching in the Congregation 27

Schedule of Conferences with Mentor 31

Where to find Appraisal Forms 38

Integrative Seminar 1
The Congregation in Context: People of God/Body of Christ/Temple of the Spirit (4.201 a & b)

Syllabus
2012-2013

Maria Erling

Integration *means to uncover links and connect across apparent boundaries. In theological education integration means to identify what is useful and applicable from one's total fund of learning and to synthesize it into a coherent whole informing the vocation of ministry and mission. The work of the seminar involves connecting learning from your reading, the seminary experience and the field setting, using a collegial context to listen to and make productive use of other viewpoints, and developing, identifying, and explicating how God calls us to mission: the vocation of the person and the congregation.*

RATIONALE

Those who prepare for leadership positions in the church need an interpretive framework for understanding congregations. Such a framework brings together theological interpretation with careful observation of human communities.

Congregations are earthen vessels, very human communities. At the same time, they are communities where people hear God's word and share at the table, bearing witness to God's love for the world. Sinners receive forgiveness and are strengthened for service. Congregations, like believers, are complex composites of fallen and forgiven realities.

An integrative approach brings theological traditions into engagement with contemporary realities through conversation, study, reflection, and common deliberation.

OUTCOMES

The course places students in a teaching parish where they learn to integrate theological study with ministry in a parish, or an agency doing public ministry.

The outcomes for the M.Div. degree are addressed in the seminar, but special attention is given to the work of Integration, in number 6*:*

1. *Demonstrate engagement in spiritual, Intellectual and ethical formation*
2. *Interpret God's Word faithfully and thoughtfully as public speakers, listeners, and writers*
3. *Analyze cultural contexts of ministry*
4. *Lead a congregation in worship and the pastoral arts*
5. *Relate their denominational tradition in context*
6. *Integrate theological conversation and experience in order to collaborate with peers in ministry in an evangelical and ecumenical manner*

Students will gain the ability to

1. Observe and record ministry priorities of the congregation and correlate this with the needs of the community as well as the theological convictions of their denominational tradition

2. Listen to the way that congregational members talk about their faith in everyday language and correlate this with theological concepts and terms, and with biblical images and stories.

3. Assess the effectiveness of a congregation's witness and service in its community by looking at communication methods, relationships that are nurtured and supported, and outreach efforts.

STRATEGIES – SCHEDULE

[The schedule is subject to change; please check web-site under Field Education, especially in the second term]

FALL SEMESTER

MODULE ONE: THE CONGREGATION AS A CENTER OF COMMUNICATION

Sept. 5 First class for IS One 10:15am – orientation to Integrative Seminars and Teaching parish

Sept. 12 Teaching Parish mentors meet at 9:00am with Dr. Erling
Mentors and students meet in Valentine Hall auditorium10:15am-11:45am

Sept. 16 **Sunday** Begin year in the Teaching Parish

Sept. 19 **Words and the Word of God: Theological Study of the Congregation** Reading: *What's Theology got to do with it?* Anthony B. Robinson Introduction;
Chapters 1 & 2, discussion

Oct. 3 **Scripture and the Living Word in the Congregation**
Reading: Robinson Chapter 3, discussion

Oct. 10 **Tools for Ministry: Communication Audit**

Oct. 17 Optional session: tips on listening and interviewing

October 31 - No class, but Communication Audit due – turn in to Katie Dodds, Valentine Office #123

MODULE TWO: THE CONGREGATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT

Nov. 7 **The Trinity and Relationships –How we belong to God**
Reading: Robinson, chapters 4 & 5, discussion

Nov. 14 **Tools for Ministry: A Relationship audit**
Reading: Robinson, chapters 6, 7 & 8, discussion

Dec. 5 **PANEL DISCUSSION I – Stewardship and relationships in the congregation**

Relationship Audit and Theological Reflection – 3 pages to report on the relationship audit and 3 pages of theological reflection. **6 pgs in all.** double spaced.

Paper guidelines: Examine the theological language that surfaces in the audits you are doing – and correlate it with the theological reading you are doing in the course readings.

1.) What are the "core convictions" or the theological guideposts of the congregation/agency as communicated to its members?
2.) What is the language of relationships? How do the pastors, diaconal leaders, and teachers use scripture stories, images, to define the identity of the congregation/agency?
3.) Who/what does the congregation/agency belong to, and in what ways is it accountable?
4.) Offer a critique: what gaps do you see in the congregations understanding & action? What are the strengths?

The paper is due on the last class day of the term: December 19

JANUARY TERM

J term ends on Jan. 25, 2013 and the Spring Semester begins on January 31, 2013. The "Human Relations Workshop" [information on this workshop go to www.ltsg.edu; Offices; Registrar; January Term 2013] will be on January 28 & 29, and we recommend doing the workshop as a first year student, if possible, as it provides a good foundation for this course's focus on context.

SPRING SEMESTER

MODULE THREE: OUTREACH AND MINISTRY IN THE WORLD

Feb. 6	**Images for the Church that include all of God's people** Reading: Robinson chs. 9 &-10
Feb. 13	**Tools for Ministry: Outreach Audit** **Imagining God's Future:**
Feb. 27	Optional session: tips for assessing outreach, touring a neighborhood, making constructive suggestions or PANEL II Discussion
March 6	**Inside an urban congregation in the period of the civil rights struggle in Omaha, NE** *Time for Burning*

Note: work hard to complete work on teaching parish outreach audit-this information will be necessary to include in the end of term paper, but is not due as a separate assignment

MODULE FOUR: LOCAL CASE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN WITNESS

March 20 **Visions of God's possibilities**
Reading: Robinson chs. 11 & 12-small group meeting

March 27 **Tools for Ministry: Team Audits of area congregations Planning session to prepare for visits**

***Spring Break –no classes March 28-April 2**

Visiting dates either Sunday April 7 or Sunday, April 14

April 10 **Presentations by teams**

April 24 **Presentations by teams**

May 1 **No class session, but** Hand in 2nd semester paper 6 pages, to Katie Dodds, Valentine Office #123

Relating our audits to an understanding of the church. Ecclesiology

Guidelines: Reflect on the nature of the church in your teaching parish setting.
1. How does the congregation understand itself as a church as opposed to a social gathering, political force, family place, or community service center?
2. Does the context (suburban, urban, rural or small town) inform or limit its vision for ministry?
3. When facing change how does this congregation draw on its core convictions, or theological tradition?

ASSESSMENT

Please note: While scholarly freedom is a right of all, civility and decency is a responsibility of all. The practice of inclusive language is expected in this course, along with the discouragement of speech and metaphors that demean any individual or group.

1. Complete all readings and participate in panel discussions.

2. Complete all written assignments according to rules of style for academic papers. (For the standard, see Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers or the Chicago Manual of Style.*)

   Three audits – communications, relationships, and outreach audits will be turned in. The first audit – communications will receive comments but no grade. The relationship and outreach audits will be integrated with the short theological essay 6 pages due at the end of each semester.

3. A group report on a visit to a congregation where team members will assess the communications, relationship understanding, and outreach activities of a congregation using the ministry tools/audits used by the students in their teaching parish.

Rubrics for assessing the two papers: This class is Pass/Fail but the papers will get a letter grade.
Superior, A The relationship audit will be integrated with insights from course readings, and classroom presentations, using proper citation [Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style]. The paper will demonstrate the student's ability to report on and in addition analyze the theological dimensions of a congregation's understanding of its relationships, including recognition of denominational traditions, or ways that the congregation may have room to grow theologically.

Competent, B The relationship audit will be integrated with course readings and classroom presentations and including proper citation [Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style]. The paper will demonstrate the student's ability to detect and report on theological themes present in the congregation's understanding of its relationships.

Satisfactory, C The paper reports on the relationship audit, but has only limited, or perfunctory mention of the course readings, or classroom presentations, without integrating or analyzing the ways that the congregation understands its relationships theologically.

Teaching Parish Assessments

Forms are found at www.ltsg.edu; Offices, Teaching Parish for teaching/preaching events to be scheduled by the supervisor-number of times depends on track of study.

TEXTBOOKS

Required Readings:

Robinson, Anthony B. *What's Theology got to do with it?* The Alban Institute, 2006

Additional readings provided

Descriptive Report for 2012- 2013

Integrative Seminar One 4.201 a and b

_____has/has not satisfied the requirements of the course.

Written work and classroom participation reflected Superior, Competent, Satisfactory level of mastery over these outcomes:

1.) Observe and record ministry priorities of the congregation and correlate this with the needs of the community as well as the theological convictions of their denominational tradition

2.) Listen to the way that congregational members talk about their faith in everyday language and correlate this with theological concepts and terms, and with biblical images and stories.

3.) Assess the effectiveness of a congregation's witness and service in its community by looking at communication methods, relationships that are nurtured and supported, and outreach efforts.

Additional Comments:

Faculty Signature:
_____

date_____

AUDITS

Communication Audit for (*name of organization*)

Mission statement, tag line or other key imagery

Description of its contexts (geographic, physical, demographic) – gather data on your zip code: Census data – government: http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/zipstats.html
Research and Evaluation unit from the ELCA gives additional information http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Research-and-Evaluation/Synod-Statistics.aspx
Income, ethnicity, age, gender, etc

Interview/survey results

Names and date range of interview/survey works

Executive Summary *[needs a short description]*

Communication Audit for (*name of organization*)

Materials/subject matter review inventory

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Communication Audit for (name of organization)

Name/type of piece

_____

Effectiveness measure #1: Consistency of piece with mission statement and goals

Effectiveness measure #2: Quality standards of piece

Effectiveness measure #3: Service to target audience

Summary

Recommendations

What each part of the Communication Audit looks like:

Mission statement or tag line
(Copy the organization's mission statement or other key imagery for reference throughout audit.)

Interview and survey results (summary)

Interview key players in the organization, (use focus groups or "listening posts") or select representative members to talk to **before** doing materials review.
Are there missing items or gaps or audiences ignored? – **Use census data and congregational statistics you have gathered to assess the wider 'audience' for this congregation's communication strategy.**

Ask questions about **audience** ("Who is your audience? How do you know?),
process ("What are you doing?"),
outcome ("What are the results? How do you know?"), and
costs.

Materials review (list of communication pieces included in audit)

Include everything that communicates a message: Web sites, telephone directory listings, yellow page ads, logo, letterhead, newspaper advertising, direct mail, radio sponsorship (tag line script), videos, event sponsorship, outdoor and indoor signs (photos), news releases, voice mail or answering machine

recorded messages (script), posters as well as the usual brochures, newsletters and magazines.

Effectiveness measure #1: Measure each communication piece individually against the organization's mission statement and goals.

- Does the piece present the organization in a way consistent with its mission and goals?
- Does the piece identify the organization's core message?

Effectiveness measure #2: Measure each piece against quality standards.

- Is the piece attractive and well designed?
- Is there consistency of "look"?
- Is the content engaging and thought provoking?
- Is "branding" evident, consistent and readily identifiable?
- Is production value excellent? (Video, Web)
- If video, does the material capitalize on the visual medium?
- Is the message accessible? (Can signs be read and understood if driving by at 60 mph?)
- Is the message timely?
- Is there a response mechanism? (Phone number, contact person, Web site?)

Effectiveness measure #3: Measure each piece against audience specifications.

- Is the intended audience internal (existing members of the organization) or external (those outside the organization)?
- Is the intended audience well targeted in the choice of media and in the presentation of the piece?
- Is the piece appropriate for the intended audience?

Summary and Recommendations – write a two page summary of the major findings of your audit, with your recommendations, to conclude your report.

Relationship Audit for (name of organization)

Mission Statement of congregation/organization – tag line, key imagery

Ask: What are the primary relationships indicated in this mission statement?

The Congregation's Constitution

Ask: what are the primary relationships indicated in the constitution?

Now: Identify 4-6 relationships maintained by the congregation/organization involving linkages beyond the congregation.
Describe in 2-3 sentences the who, what, where, when, how, and how much of each relationship.

1. Example: Relationship with Lutheran World Relief: a group of five women meets monthly at a group member's home to assemble quilts for LWR. They produce 100-150 quilts which are blessed during a worship service and then shipped. This relationship is in its 10th year.

2. Example: the congregation's support for/relationship to wider church

3.

4.

5.

6.

In-Depth Relationship Assessment: Complete the following for each of the relationships

I. Describe your process for learning about the relationship: the materials you reviewed and the people you interviewed
II. Birth story: how did the relationship get started and what/who sustains it
III. Mutuality Assessment: Who gives, who gets; what is different

and who is changed because of the relationship

IV. Relationship of relationship to the mission priorities of the congregation

How are these relationships supported? - How does the congregation do stewardship?

What is the language used in sermons, communication materials, newsletters, and coffee hour conversation to describe how and why these relationships are important.
Does it conform to; If…. Then, or Because,….. Therefore

Describe the vertical dimension of these relationships: Does the congregation make a connection between the relationships they have and their understanding of their mission, and God's guiding hand in what they are doing? Are the relationships they tend related to their mission statement/tag line/constitutional foundation?

How effectively is this communicated?

Outreach Audit

1. Mission statement/tag line/key imagery

2. Look again at census data:
http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/zipstats.html
Research and Evaluation from the ELCA http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Research-and-Evaluation/Synod-Statistics.aspx
Income, ethnicity, age, gender, etc.
Take a tour: who is living around the congregation, who drives by, and what are the other congregations in the neighborhood

Correlate the intended audience/unchurched/needy that the congregation seeks to reach with the impressions you get from looking at the data and your own tour of the area:

2. How does the parish/congregation relate to its neighborhood?

Congregation's history of involvement within community
Note any major events that affected the community as a whole

'Silent history' – do you detect some gaps? whose story is not being told?

List outreach efforts already underway for the congregation: some of these will be similar to the relationships you noted in the relationship audit:
here list only those happening in the 'parish' neighborhood/community:

3. Assess how outreach efforts correlate with the needs and concerns of the congregation and community

What is the perceived (spoken) major concern of the congregation?
examples: Money? Membership loss? Old building? Sunday School?

What are the community's needs? Whose needs are being met within the community? Whose are not and why? - gather perceptions of the community from your interviews with people in the congregation

Then, identify any community leaders in the congregation and have an interview with them, or, try to arrange an interview with a school principal, police officer, real estate broker, local school board member, or other leader in the community **in this interview ask about the community's perceptions of the congregation:**

How is the church perceived by the community?

What stories are told (old & new) about the congregation and its people?

4. Ask positively: What excites members about ministry in this location? What would help move this ministry forward?

Or, Ask negatively: "What barriers do leaders encounter when they want to start a new ministry initiative?"

5. How can the "church" make a difference in this place? - assess the ecclesiology of the congregation and the mission opportunities in its setting

The Teaching Parish

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Parish expands and deepens the student's learning perspective on the many ways God works through local congregations. As the first year of field education; it is required for the M.Div. and M.A.M.S. degree programs and serves to provide a concrete setting for discernment of vocation to ministry through conversation and work with a particular Christian community.

Teaching Parish students dedicate a defined amount of time (7-10 hrs on weeks they are in the parish), to explore limited roles of leadership in the congregation, and contribute to the congregation in three important ways:

1. **By observing and listening to the congregation,** the student notices how the congregation relates to its context, how the members live out their faith in daily life, and how their worship, fellowship and decision making is a unique response to the Gospel

2. **By teaching and preaching,** the student begins to express how the Word of God is relevant to contemporary needs and also faithful to the canonical scriptures, creeds and confessional traditions. (M.Div. students will teach two times and preach twice; M.A.M.S. students may substitute teaching for preaching);

3. **By worshipping and praying with the congregation,** the student establishes a habit of listening to God, the source of all life and faith.

The congregation and the Mentor share their congregational life with the student, and review and discuss the student's skills and gifts for public leadership. Reflection on vocation – both the sense of purpose for the student in ministry, but also the corporate vocation, or 'call' that the congregation or ministry setting has received and faithfully engages - frames the Teaching Parish experience and themes throughout the year. In this way, Teaching Parish helps to prepare candidates for public offices of ministry, and particularly the endorsement stage of the second year of candidacy.

Initial explanations of the main emphases of the Teaching Parish experience follow: observation, listening, prayer, vocational reflection, and mission. Next the shape of the arrangement between a congregation and a student is described and a description of the relationship of mentor and student. Guidelines for weekly conferences between mentor and student may be used to initiate conversation. Evaluation forms are also available at the Seminary's website:

www.ltsg.edu click on Offices; Field Education; scroll to Teaching Parish section.

Observation-Listening

The seminary course that accompanies Teaching Parish, Integrative Seminar I, presents a variety of ways to listen and observe in congregations. Each congregation has a particular story of listening and responding to God's Word. Through interpretive methods and theories, the course aims to assist students in understanding congregations as places of ongoing discernment and service.

To be able to minister to real people in real places one must have open ears and eyes.
Faith begins in hearing and believing the good news that in Jesus Christ God has defeated sin, death and evil. A Christian finds comfort in the assurance that God hears prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Listening and being heard are basic to the Christian faith, and those who seek to minister in the name of Christ Jesus take a listening posture toward God and others. They must also be able to see their neighbor, and to be able to hear the needs of the world around them. Teaching Parish provides that very real setting where faith can meet the world of need.
Faith that grasps the gospel of Jesus Christ develops through interpretation of the scriptures and applying that message in daily life. Students in Teaching Parish listen both to what scripture is saying to the congregation and to how a congregation hears and understands scripture.

In response to the Word of God, people of faith will respond with their own word. Fellowship and prayer comprise the key elements under girding the faith and mission of a congregation. Teaching Parish provides a context for listening well and asking questions, for talking and speaking about their faith with the people of a congregation.

Prayer

At the heart of every Christian congregation is prayer. Gathered around the Word of God and the sacraments, the people pray: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things; Come, Lord Jesus; Come, Holy Spirit." Stemming from these prayers are the many collective and individual prayers that express the variety and intensity of human expectations, needs, fears and hopes.

Through scheduled activities in the Teaching Parish, students have the opportunity to learn from a living, prayerful, congregation and to join its life of service. In order to pray well for a congregation, one must

listen well to congregational members, understand their life together, and respectfully value the rich diversity within every particular assemble.

Vocational Reflection

For ELCA students:

Most students take Teaching Parish during their first year of theological studies and will take the next step toward rostered ministry by participating in the endorsement panel of their approved candidacy process. At this point a candidate should be able to affirm her or his own sense of call to a rostered ministry. At the time of endorsement, the members of a candidacy committee should have reasonable confidence that the candidate's sense of call will be affirmed publicly by the church in ensuing educational and field experiences.

For all students:

In order to assist students in discernment of call, and to prepare students for articulation of a sense of call, an important component of Teaching Parish is vocational reflection. Theological readings and discussions between the Mentor and student can guide this process of vocational reflection.

Mission

All of the study and reflection we do in class and at the Teaching Parish is not just an exercise in devotion; it is intended to equip us to discern how God is calling us to service in the world. Students are making important contributions to God’s mission in a particular time and place by putting together their reading and reflection and anticipating how they as leaders would address the needs and opportunities presented to them in a congregation or special ministry.

PRACTICAL ISSUES IN THE TEACHING PARISH

Congregation and Student

Teaching Parish assignments are normally within approximately one hour's drive from Gettysburg. On the assigned weeks, students spend seven to ten hours in activity related to Teaching Parish, including travel time. Such activity includes:

- Observation and interaction;
- Teaching and preaching at times specified in the Teaching Parish schedule (below);

- Participation and occasional assisting in worship; education; & service ministries
- Visitation and interviews with congregational members;
- Study of the community and various models of ministry;
- Sunday lunches with members of the congregation;
- Conferences with mentor;
- Travel time-**Teaching Parish Mileage Compensation** We ask the congregation to reimburse the student to and from the church for the regularly scheduled Sunday morning responsibilities at the current IRS standard rate (currently 55.5 cents). Mileage will be calculated as either the distance between the Seminary and the congregation OR the students residence to the congregation-whichever is less.

Note: While students do not need to be at the teaching parish every week of the term, they must be in the teaching parish at least as many weeks as necessary to complete the number of mentor conferences that are listed below. The 'free' weeks are very limited, but they provide some flexibility. The mentor and student need to decide on a schedule for conferences and visitation that best suits them.

Teaching Parish students are not expected to perform additional duties beyond those articulated above, and should not staff or start any programs or group activities in the parish. Students **should not** be asked to do so by mentors or congregational leaders.

Congregations should arrange for members to take turns inviting the Teaching Parish student for meals following services, and to allow time for conversation and questions. The students will be depending upon these invitations to learn about the congregation's life beyond public worship. Such conversation times form the basis for the student's written assignments.

Mentor and Student

An important aspect of the 7-10 hours that the student will spend in the parish or institution during the selected weeks of the term is the development of an intentional professional relationship with the teaching parish mentor. Each parish is different, and each mentor is different, but a professional relationship can only be effective if there is clear communication of expectations, a real desire to understand the gifts and strengths of the student and the mentor, as well as prompt attention to areas where new learning is necessary.

The conferences between mentor and student may begin with scripture reading and prayer, as a way to integrate the various learning tasks assigned in the course with the life of the parish, or agency. We recommend using a form of *lectio divina* - a way of concentrating the mind on a particular expression or experience of God's Word, and linking the fruits of that concentration to daily life –to open the mentoring sessions. A description of this practice is appended to the Teaching Parish Reference Book. Biblical reflection done in this way can deeply enrich a discussion of:

a) the theology, context, and mission of the congregation as it emerges from the modules of Integrative Seminar I, or the student's preparations and experiences in teaching and preaching in the Teaching Parish context.

b) reflections upon vocation, prompting students to enrich their sense and understanding of call to ministry for the professional pastor, Christian educator, or diaconal minister as well as an understanding of the call of the congregation, or agency.

Appraisals

Students are responsible for getting the appraisal forms to the Field Education Office by the deadline. These include: a one-page mid-year review, Teaching and Preaching evaluations, and a final evaluation at the end of the year. Please refer to each form for the various questions for appraisal and evaluation. The final appraisals of the year may be shared with synodical candidacy committees.

During the second semester, the Mentor or a qualified appointee should complete one teaching evaluations and two preaching evaluations for students in the Master of Divinity degree. Students in the Master of Arts in Ministerial Studies--Track A should be evaluated in four teaching experiences. Students in MAMS--Track C have the option of teaching or a combination of teaching and preaching experiences, or for diaconal students, a service ministry component.

Teaching Parish and the Diaconal Ministry Candidate

Field work plays a vital role in the preparation and formation of diaconal ministry candidates. Diaconal ministry takes place in the boundaries where church and society interface. Regardless of the particular ministry setting in which they serve, diaconal ministers will be expected to understand the dynamic relationships within and between congregational and societal systems and to provide leadership in connecting these systems. Therefore, the process of contextualization, reflection,

integration, and evaluation will be given particular attention throughout the field work experience.

The goals of field experience for diaconal ministry candidates are:

- to develop a vision and understanding of his or her particular ministry of Word and service as rooted in the Word of God and witness to the Gospel;

- to develop skills for understanding systemic relationships within and between congregations and societal agencies;

- to develop strategies that provide ministry at particular interfaces of church and society;

- to demonstrate competence in the previously stated goals in the planning and execution of a diaconal project designed to engage the congregation's attention more keenly with respect to its ministry of the baptized in the world. Such as project will evidence the candidate's grasp of Lutheran theology and its derivative understanding of Christian vocation.

The first three bullets in this list are appropriate to the Teaching Parish assignment. Bullet three on this list begins to emerge within the Teaching Parish assignment and is more fully developed during the completion of LTSG course 4.205, the Required Diaconal Ministry Independent Study Project. The final bullet refers to LTSG course 4.205 Required Diaconal Ministry Independent Study Project which takes place after receipt of a positive candidacy endorsement decision.

The practical activities assigned in the teaching parish are appropriate for diaconal ministry candidates. Most diaconal ministers are not called to settings that include regular worship leadership but there are obvious places within the liturgy where church and world connect, and these are the more appropriate places for the diaconal ministry candidate to lead: (receiving the bread and wine, preparing the altar, distributing Holy Communion, caring for the altar and vessels, reading the Gospel) and roles that flow from the heart of diaconal ministry (leadership of intercessory prayer, distribution of Holy Communion to the homebound, preaching, oversight of the 'frontiers' – the gathering and the sending, and planning worship with the world in mind).

The opportunities for visitation and interviews with congregational members, Sunday lunches with members of the congregation, and observation and study of the community might be structured to include individuals who provide entrée to the area of specialization of the diaconal ministry candidate: chaplaincy, social work, pastoral care, spiritual direction, community organizing, parish nursing, etc.

Teaching Parish Calendar

Fall Semester 2012

Orientation & Assignments Mentors meet at 9:00am with Dr. Erling and then Mentor and Students attend at 10:15am-11:45am in Valentine Auditorium/Room 115	Wednesday, Sept. 12
Parish Visits Begin	Sunday, Sept. 16
Thanksgiving Recess	Thursday, Nov. 22- Sunday, Nov. 25
Last Parish Visits	Sunday, Dec. 9
Mid-Year appraisal due at Field Ed. Office All students hand in mid-year form and one teaching form	**Friday, Dec. 14**

Spring Semester 2013

Seminary January Term	Jan. 2-Jan. 25
Parish Visits Resume	Sunday, Jan. 27
Good Friday & Easter Day Student in parish	Friday, March 29 & Sunday, March 31
Last Parish Visits	Sunday, April 28
Appraisal Forms Due at Field Ed. Office All students hand in Mentor evaluation; student evaluation; two lay persons forms. In addition: M.Div. students hand in one teaching and two preaching evaluations; Master of Arts in Ministerial studies-Track A should be evaluated in four teaching experiences, but they do not preach; MAMS-Track C have the option of a combination teaching and preaching)	**Monday, May 6**

►Send evaluations to: Katie Dodds, Field Education Office, Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, 61 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, PA 17325 or email: kdodds@ltsg.edu

Resources

Resources for Mentor Conferences/Student Dialogue for Teaching and Preaching in the Congregation

In your Teaching Parish, you and your mentor will have time to reflect together on vocation (calling) and on the ways in which a sense of call is strengthened and supported. A time of prayer and conversation, the "Mutual up-building of the Saints," is a long standing Christian tradition.

These resources can expand or deepen your conversation together:

Suggested texts

Foster, Richard *Prayer* [Varieties of prayer]

Hall, Douglas John *Why Christianity*? [the relevance of theology in contemporary society]

Hartman, Olov, *Holy Masquerade* (a novel that investigates the honesty of the minister as [he] [dated] follows his vocation.)

Norris, Kathleen *Dakota* (appropriate for rural, small town ministry) – and for diaconal or lay ministry preparation

Taylor, Barbara Brown *The Preaching Life* [Enjoy elegant language]

Luther's Large and Small Catechism [Timeless, basic, reflection on ordinary life]

Robinson, Marilynne *Gilead* [fascinating and moving novel of the interpersonal and intrapsychic trials of a rural minister]

Bernanos, Georges *Diary of a Country Priest* [novel set in rural France of a young curate's spiritual lows and highs]

Suggested Prayer and Discernment Themes

Draw a lectio text from relevant lectionary text for the day and then choose one of the following themes for reflection with your mentor.

1. Share with one another some description of your prayer life.

2. Discuss expectations of what the student might hear when she or he asks congregational members about their individual prayers.

3. Describe personal experiences of relinquishment, of change, of letting go.

4. What role does prayer play in the corporate decision making work of the congregation?

5. Relate prayer to being called to public ministry in a congregation.

6. What is the relationship of prayer to preaching? When is your Sabbath time, and where is your holy rest? Luther's Large Catechism on the Sabbath-(3rd Comm) Found in Book of Concord

7. What are your experiences of healing prayer?

8. How can we use our prayer to care for others?

9. How does the prayer of the gathered community reflect the needs of the world?

10. How do you understand prayer in the Holy Spirit?

Mentor Conferences

NOTE: In each semester there are 9 conference sessions with the teaching parish mentor. These can be scheduled at the parish, or at another location. Some flexibility in scheduling is provided because there are stresses and strains in a seminary student's schedule. Please schedule these sessions *early in the semester*—you need to complete at least 9 allowing for a few [2-3] absences when needed during the term.

Some suggestions for these conferences are:

MODULE ONE **Conference #1**

Orientation to the parish and the context

Review of Teaching Parish schedule & strategies

Is the schedule for lunches in place?

Look ahead to schedule fall and spring teaching times, and related preaching times.

Beginning Observation:

> How does it feel to be a newcomer in this place? Look for the public sources of information that disclose clues about congregational life: What's on the bulletin boards? What materials do you see in the Sunday School classrooms? Are there any obviously hallowed spaces or symbols? Are there signs? How did you find your way?

Vocational Reflection

Share memories of one another's "home congregation:" how did that congregation shape you?

Share with one another your present understanding of your vocation. What are your expectations for growing in understanding of your vocation throughout the coming year?

MODULE ONE Conference #2

Learn about the congregation's neighborhood and discuss the various means the congregation uses to communicate its ministry to the community. How is the congregation known in this area?

Vocational Reflection

What does a public ministry mean in today's world?

MODULE ONE Conference #3

How is Scripture 'heard' and studied in the congregation? If you are ready to begin planning a sermon or lesson, look at the "Exegetical Beginnings,", (found on-line at www.ltsg.edu; Field Education; Teaching Parish), to discuss how to listen to the text as well as to the congregation.

Vocational Reflection

Alvin Rogness, a Midwestern Lutheran leader in the 70's & 80's, gave this advice: There are two kinds of calls, one is clear and obvious. The other is a call more subtle, but you find that you can't do anything else until you respond to it"

How is your vocation to public ministry in the church related to the vocation of all the baptized in the world?

MODULE ONE Conference #4

Jesus talked about being 'in but not of the world.' How is the congregation in the world and in tension with the world? Is there any such tension in the mission statement of the congregation?

Vocational Reflection

How is your vocation preserved, and shaped by the words and gestures of the people of God in the congregation?

MODULE TWO Conference #1

Talk about the congregation's worship forms—i.e. liturgy, use of hymns, images displayed in the worship space, movement and actions of the assembly. How do the worshipers sense God's presence – is a vertical [transcendent] or horizontal [immanent in the community] dimension prominent?

Vocational Reflection

How is my sense of vocation affected by the knowledge that God is present in the most ordinary things?

MODULE TWO Conference #2

Focus on Worship forms-especially hymns. How are images of Jesus, Sin & Redemption portrayed? What do the hymn choices reveal about the congregations understanding of our relationships with each other and our accountability to God?

Vocational Reflection

What devotional practices help us keep anxiety and confusion at a minimum?

MODULE TWO Conference #3

Are the congregation's relationships with the synod [Lutheran] presbytery or conference, healthy? What is the congregation's understanding of the wider church? How is this communicated?

Vocational Reflection

Discuss what kind of "ideal" might be operating in your vocation, and explore what it means to "depend entirely on the grace of God."

MODULE TWO Conference #4

How does congregational life and worship express local, congregational traditions? How does congregational life as a whole express the denomination or confessional tradition?

Vocational Reflection

What does it mean to be faithful to a confessional tradition?

MODULE TWO Conference #5

Discuss student's teaching experience: How did it go? What surprised you? What will you do differently next time?

Discuss fall semester, mid-year appraisal in the Teaching Parish Reference Book.

Vocational Reflection

"In my vocational self-understanding, where am I now in comparison to where I was at the beginning of Teaching Parish?"

How has the Teaching Parish shaped you?

MODULE THREE Conference #1

How do outsiders view the congregation?

Vocational Reflection

What does it mean to have a ‘Public’ role as a congregation, or a minister, or rostered leader?

MODULE THREE Conference #2

Describe the religious ecology of your congregational neighborhood.

What are the other significant religious traditions in the area your parish serves? Does the congregation have any ecumenical relationships of note?

Vocational Reflection

Reflect on the liturgical season and the many changes emphasized during this time of year. Does ministry change its focus in these transitions? Are there new opportunities for service in the community?

MODULE THREE Conference #3

Who holds us accountable in our ministry?

Identify local community leaders, denominational structures; public awareness & other aspects of accountability.

Vocational Reflection

How does public accountability contribute to one's spiritual growth and faith commitment?

MODULE THREE Conference #4

Does the town/neighborhood have a way to interact with the congregation to work together for the good of the whole community? Are the community leaders – political, commercial, voluntary – involved in the congregation or friends of the congregation? How can better relationships be established?

Vocational Reflection

How do you relate the rostered leaders' sense of call to ministry with the congregations' own vision for ministry?

MODULE THREE Conference #5

What are the congregation's/ agency's greatest assets for leadership in the community?

Vocational Reflection

What new leadership skills have emerged for the student during this year of study? How can these skills be used to address needs in a community?

MODULE FOUR Conference #1

How does the congregation understand itself in relation to the mission of God? How does the congregation understand itself in relation to the wider church & ecumenical partners?

Vocational Reflection

How does the reading of scripture open our hearts to sense the needs of the world and deepen our attachments to each other?

MODULE FOUR Conference #2

How does the congregation and the leadership sense that God is calling them into the future? Where do they look for guidance?

Vocational Reflection

How does preaching in the parish relate to the vocation of members?

MODULE FOUR Conference #3

What is the congregation's understanding of the nature and purpose of the church? How does the congregation see its relationship to the rest of society?
For example: Refer to the ELCA Constitution, chapter 3.
www.elca.org/os/constitution/cwo3.html

Vocational Reflection

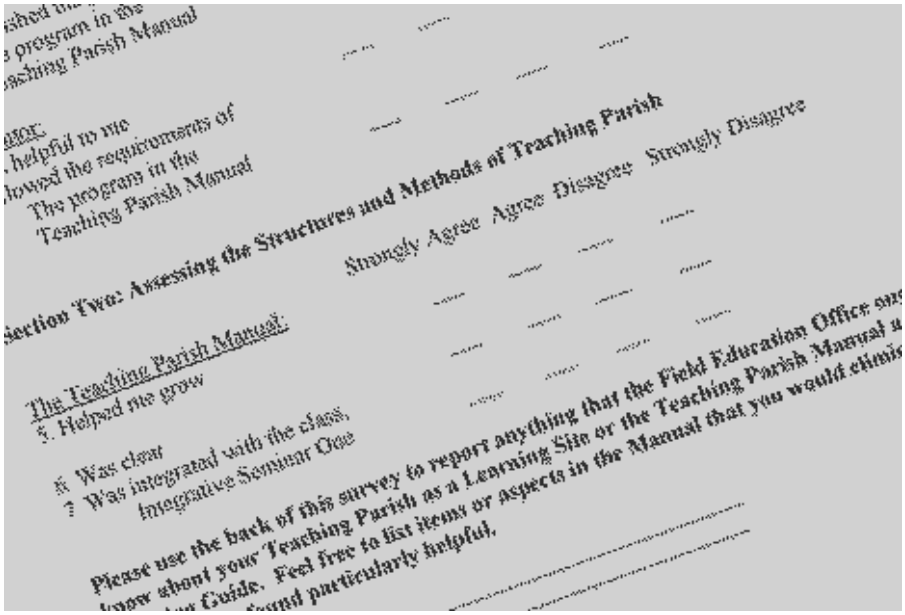
What “practices” of leadership can promote health within a congregation?

MODULE FOUR Conference #4

Discuss Appraisals

Vocational Reflection

Where am I now in vocational self-understanding as compared to the beginning of Teaching Parish?

What are the next steps/next stages for continued growth?

Appraisals
Found at: www.ltsg.edu;
Bottom of page see Field Education;
Teaching Parish