



MCC[®]

METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Internship & Supervising Clergy Manual

Last Revision - 2016

NOTE: This manual is for Supervising Clergy, specifically, but also useful to anyone involved in the internship process, including interns themselves and internship committees.

Table of Contents

Internship overview.....	3
MCC Credentialing Process: Internship	4
Finding an Internship Church.....	4
Covenant between the Supervising Clergy and Intern	5
The Internship Committee	5
Meetings with a Supervising Clergy.....	6
Evaluation.....	6
Ethics of Professional Spiritual Leaders in MCC.....	7
The Learning Covenant	8
A Recommended Process for Creating the Learning Covenant.....	9
Components of an Internship	10
Building the Learning Covenant	11
Areas of Ministry Appropriate for Internships.....	13
The Internship Committee.....	16
Internship Committee Overview	17
The Supervisory Meeting.....	23
A Suggested Process for the Supervisory Meeting.....	25
Verbatim Report of a Pastoral Conversation.....	27
Examining Case Studies and Verbatims	28
Basic Levels of Supervisory Concern.....	29
Feedback.....	30
Common Problems for Supervisors.....	31
Evaluations.....	32
Sample Forms.....	36
Top Tips from the Field	44

Original (2008) Revision Committee:

Reverend Chris Dowd, Journey MCC, UK
Reverend Dan Koeshell, MCC San Diego, CA
Dr. David Mellott, Lancaster Theological Seminary, PA
Reverend Durrell Watkins, Sunshine Cathedral, FL
Reverend Dr. Edgard Danielsen-Morales, MCC NY, NY
Reverend Dr. Kharma Amos, MCC NOVA, VA
Reverend Dr. Mona West, Church of the Trinity MCC, FL
Reverend Dr. Neil Thomas, MCC LA, CA
Reverend Presley Sutherland, MCC North London, UK
Reverend Sharon Ferguson, MCC North London, UK
Reverend Robert Griffin, Office of Clergy Development

Internship overview

MCC Credentialing Process: Internship

The Ministry Action Plan (MAP) designed for people preparing for ordination at the REVM Retreat will specify the time when they should begin their internship, as well as the church and supervising clergy that have been approved and/or recommended. Students enrolled in an educational program may have their internship run concurrent with any field education requirements of their seminary. All internships must be approved in advance by the Office of Formation and Leadership Development.

The internship is a time of applied learning when interns take the content they have learned in classes and put it into practice in the local church. It is a time of theological reflection on the practice of ministry. Spiritual work continues in addition to experiential learning. For those who have been previously ordained in another tradition (sometimes called 'transfer clergy'), the internship purposes shift slightly to being a time to take one's previous pastoral/education and contextualize it for Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). MCC ministry has a unique and specific character, and it is essential for clergy from other traditions to have some time working with a supervisor as they understand and apply their skills and insights in the MCC context.

The internship should last for a period of one year or approximately 600 hours. In the event that the MCC internship runs concurrent with a seminary field education placement, which usually lasts nine months, an additional section must be added to the Learning Covenant which outlines goals for the intern for the remaining three months.

A copy of the learning covenant between the intern and supervising clergy must be sent to the Office of Formation and Leadership Development to be placed in the intern's file. The church at which the internship should be completed will provide interns with a broad range of experiences in ministry. Such churches must be strong, stable, diverse congregations called to take on the ministry and responsibility of training interns.

Interns should not serve in non-approved church settings, with or without long distance supervision. The purpose of the year of internship is to provide a hands-on, supervised experience. Placing interns alone in a church without an on-site supervisor is inappropriate because it denies the intern valuable learning experiences and it may place the intern in a difficult situation.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted to persons who have other, rare circumstances that require a different process, such as transfer clergy, those with Standing by Call, or those whose personal situation makes a project-based or multiple component internship more suitable. The Office of Formation and Leadership Development must approve all exceptions.

Finding an Internship Church

The first step to beginning an internship is to find an appropriate and approved church setting. The Office of Formation and Leadership Development will work with denominational leaders, church pastors, interns, and seminary partners to identify appropriate settings for internships. Suggestions will be given at the REVM Retreat and specified in the MAP. The Office of Formation and Leadership Development no longer maintains a list of approved 'Teaching

Churches.’ We believe any church can be a ‘teaching church’ as long as it is a healthy church with a trained Supervising Clergy.

People will want to consider a number of factors in selecting an internship church. Is the Supervising Clergy someone that the intern respects and with whom they can work well? Is this a congregation where the intern will be both comfortable and challenged? Is the church located somewhere to which the intern can realistically commute or move? Does this congregation have the resources to train that particular intern? Does it feel like a good “fit”?

The Office of Formation and Leadership Development is also open to working with interns and churches to create a ‘hybrid’ or shared internship which takes into account the intern’s previous ministerial experience and geographical limitations. As a general rule interns may not complete their internship in their ‘home church.’

Covenant between the Supervising Clergy and Intern

The first thing that an intern and their Supervisor should work on is the Learning Covenant. This is important to set direction for the time together to provide clarity about what is expected of each and to determine how the intern and the program will be evaluated. This Supervising Clergy Manual contains forms to assist in developing the Covenant. However, it is not necessary to use these specific forms if there are other forms in use by an intern’s seminary or which better serve the intern and supervisor in outlining and achieving their work together. The important point is that the learning covenant is clear and includes SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound).

It is generally helpful to include tasks with which the intern feels comfortable and those which are new or challenging. It is important for interns to be clear with supervisors about areas that they want to explore and those that are difficult. The more a supervisor knows about an intern’s needs, the better they will be able to help the intern grow in those areas. As with any ministry, the covenant will reflect a mixture of the intern’s needs and calling and the needs of the congregation. It is important to be clear about the needs of the individuals involved and to be flexible in meeting the needs of the congregation/ministry context.

The Internship Committee

One option that can enrich the intern’s experience is work with an Internship Committee. After they have completed the learning covenant, the intern and supervisor may want to discuss the appointment of a committee. This is a group of four lay people in the church who will work with the intern during the duration of the Internship. Because ordained ministry exists to serve and empower the laity, it is very important that candidates get feedback and guidance from laity during their training process.

The Internship Committee is there to provide encouragement, guidance, perspective, and prayer with and for an intern. They should function as a sounding board for ideas and be a way for interns to get feedback about strengths and areas of needed growth. The more honest this group is with the intern, the more the intern will learn from and with them. They are not primarily

an evaluative group, and they will not sign the endorsement for ordination; they may, however, provide input to the Board of Directors and/or Supervising Clergy who will have to endorse the intern's application for ordination.

An intern should talk to his or her supervising clergy about how they want to appoint the members of this team. Some clergy select the committee based on their knowledge of the congregation; others will want the intern's input about potential members of this committee. The Committee should meet monthly or, at the very least, quarterly.

Meetings with a Supervising Clergy

During the internship, interns and their supervisors are required to meet weekly. The meetings should include time for reflection on the ministry that the intern is doing, evaluation, prayer and spiritual direction. Interns should prepare for the meetings with their supervisor. The two of them should agree on what the intern should bring to the meetings. Interns may want to prepare questions, a case study or a reflection paper to begin the discussions. The more preparation that goes into these meetings, the more the intern will get out of them.

It is acceptable for weekly meetings to take advantage of virtual technology as necessary. It is always better if the intern and supervising clergy can meet face-to-face for their weekly meetings. However, they may decide to use Skype and/or phone for some of their meetings in order to accommodate distance and/or the schedules of both Supervisor and Intern.

The Supervising Clergy will be the one to endorse the intern for ordination in MCC. A copy of the Supervisor's final evaluation of the intern will be part of the ordination application.

Evaluation

The intern and supervisor should meet at the end of the first full month of the internship to evaluate the learning covenant that they are using and the mechanisms by which they communicate (see form in appendix). Is the intern learning the things that they need to learn? Are the projects they are involved with working? Is communication working? The intern and supervisor should make any changes that they need to make to the learning covenant at this time, initial the changes and send copies of the updated forms to the Office of Formation and Leadership Development.

The intern and supervisor should also meet for evaluation half way through the year and at the end of the year. This Supervising Clergy Manual has forms and information about the evaluation process. The evaluation should look at how well the placement is working as a learning environment and at the growth in the intern's ministry skills. Again, the more open and honest the process is, the more everyone involved will learn from it. Interns need to be willing to hear difficult things at times so that they can improve their skills because their ministry will benefit from it. They should also hear encouragement as appropriate. It is also essential that Supervising Clergy be willing to provide honest, specific, and sometimes critical feedback to the intern. This feedback should always be aimed at assisting in the intern's formation and increasing the potential that they will enjoy sustainable, successful ministry throughout their career.

At the end of the internship, the supervisor and intern will want to evaluate whether the intern has successfully completed the learning covenant or if additional work is required.

A 3-5 page narrative evaluation from the Supervising Clergy must be submitted to the OFLD at the conclusion of the internship. This will be a permanent part of the intern's file and will comprise a portion of the materials that will be reviewed by the ordination interview team.

Ethics of Professional Spiritual Leaders in MCC

All interns must review and sign the Ethics of Professional Leadership in MCC (aka Code of Conduct) that is included in the MCC Clergy Manual and are expected to live by these guidelines throughout the internship process. The Code of Conduct can be signed 'electronically' at www.ofld.mccchurch.org (<http://ofld.mccchurch.org/programs-what-we-do/clergy-licensure/clergy-code-of-conduct/>)

The Learning Covenant

The Learning Covenant

A written “**Learning Covenant**” is used in an internship to help focus the work, to bring clarity to the nature of this relationship, and to minimize misunderstandings. More specifically, it

- States the learning goals of the intern,
- Designates strategies for achieving the learning goals, and
- Identifies specific ways in which this work will be supervised.

The learning covenant should normally be completed within the first two weeks of an internship.

A Recommended Process for Creating the Learning Covenant

Step 1. The intern and supervisor work independently to complete their respective covenant-building worksheets. (See Worksheets.) **Before this step is completed supervisors may want to have the intern complete a spiritual gifts inventory or other assessments that help to identify the interns’ unique mix of gifts, experiences, and growing edges.

Step 2. The intern and supervisor meet to share information from their worksheets and to explore areas of common concerns and differences.

Step 3. The intern and supervisor meet with the Internship Committee to explore answers to Section II of Supervisor’s Worksheet.

Step 4. The intern prepares a “draft” of the learning covenant based upon the discussions in Step 2 & 3 above. (See “Learning Covenant”.)

Step 5. The intern and supervisor meet again to review the draft, make revisions as necessary, and arrive at a consensus.

Step 6. The intern puts the Covenant in final form and distributes copies to:

- the Supervisor
- the Internship Committee
- the Intern
- the Office of Formation and Leadership Development

Components of an Internship

1. The Experience in Ministry. The experiences of the internship are planned by the intern and the supervising clergy with five major concerns in mind:

- the learning goals of the intern;
- the needs of the congregation/ministry context;
- the expectations of the supervising clergy;
- the goals/requirements of any field education occurring concurrently; and
- the requirements of the denomination.

2. A Learning Covenant. All five of these concerns are examined carefully before or during the first weeks of the internship, and a written “learning covenant” is prepared as a guide to the internship. As the time of ministry progresses, the covenant may be modified or updated so that it serves as a relevant, functional tool to guide the learning process and ministry with the teaching congregation.

3. Supervision

- A.** An internship must have an approved, trained **Supervising Clergy**. In addition to the day-to-day administrative oversight of the intern’s work, the supervising clergy is expected to meet with the intern weekly to reflect together about the intern’s experience in ministry.
- B.** Each internship setting is also encouraged to designate an **Internship Committee** of lay persons to meet periodically with the intern for theological reflection and feedback.

4. Evaluation Processes.

A. Evaluation of Internship Structure and Relationships.

At the end of the first month of the internship, the intern and supervisor participate in a process of evaluating the structure and state of key relationships in the program.

B. Evaluation of Intern’s Ministry

Written evaluation of the intern is made by the supervising clergy

In a year-long internship, evaluation is done twice, at the mid-point and at the end of the ministry period.

Input from the Internship Committee is encouraged for guiding the supervising clergy in preparing a fair and accurate evaluation.

This evaluation culminates in the endorsement of the intern for ordination. If a supervisor is not able to endorse the intern for ordination, the OFLD should be consulted to determine what appropriate next steps must be taken.

5. Additional Requirements. During the internship, candidates are expected to complete as many additional requirements specified in their Ministry Action Plan (MAP) as possible. It is highly advantageous for the internship to come as near to the end of the intern’s MAP completion as possible.

Building the Learning Covenant

Questions for Interns:

- A. What experience, knowledge or concerns do I bring to this internship in the following areas of pastoral responsibility?

Pastoral Function	My Strengths	Areas of Needed Growth
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<u>Pastoral Care</u>		
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<u>Worship and Preaching</u>		
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<u>Teaching and Education</u>		
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<u>Evangelism and Social Ministry</u>		
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<u>Leadership and Administration</u>		
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- B. What do I need to understand about how congregations function?
- C. How do I assess my current skills for relating to other people?
- D. How do I assess my current skills for interpreting theologically my experiences in life and ministry?
- E. What is my present understanding of my vocation?
- F. What is my present understanding of my pastoral identity?
- G. How do I assess my present own level of spiritual discernment?
- H. What other issues, in addition to the ones noted above, do I want to address in this internship?
- I. Given my knowledge of who I am and how I learn, the kind of supervision which I would find most helpful is...

Building the Learning Covenant

Questions for Supervisors:

- A. What particular areas of ministry energize me and bring me the most satisfaction?
- B. How would I assess my experience in this congregation to date, and how does this influence my present approach to ministry in this context?
- C. How would I describe my style of leadership? How is this likely to influence the way I supervise the intern?
- D. What learning goals do I hope to accomplish for myself during this internship?
- E. In light of the congregation's mission statement and ministry plan, what are the 4-5 primary areas of service in which we hope the intern will gain ministry experience?
- F. What are the 2-3 areas of service in which we hope the intern will take on a leadership role?
- G. What, if any, are your personal expectations of the intern with regard to the following?
 - Office hours:
 - Days off:
 - Dress Code:
 - The way we treat confidential information:
 - When and where we will meet for weekly supervisory conferences:
 - The intern's use of written reports for use in supervisory conferences:
 - Other:
- H. What areas of ministry does the intern have opportunity to experience in your church to further growth in ministry?
- I. What gifts (education, experience, skills, interests, needs) does the intern bring from which the church can benefit?
- J. How can these opportunities and gifts for ministry be combined to create an effective Learning Covenant?

Areas of Ministry Appropriate for Internships

A. Pastoral Services

1. Sacraments, Rites and Preaching: Personal and public ceremonies of the church, including baptism, holy communion, holy unions, funerals and services of worship, with appropriate concern for liturgy, and church music.
2. Pastoral Care: Personal visitation and other forms of sustained contact with persons in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, or those confined to their own residence.
3. Administrative and Stewardship: The coordination of the daily life and work of the parish, its professional and supportive staff, and its various boards and committees. Work with budget problems in relation to program building.

B. Education Services

1. Children and Youth Education: Oversight and development of educational experiences for youth, with attention to teacher training, curriculum review, resource development, and special programs.
2. Adult Education: Creation of varied opportunities for adults to reflect on their Spirituality/Spiritual Growth and its relation to the world in which they live.
3. Youth Fellowship: Religious and recreational activities enabling youth to experience personal and social relations in the exploration of faith values and spiritual issues.
4. Special Programs: Identification of special needs and issues of the congregation and ways of meeting them through special programming.

C. Missional Services

1. Outreach: Provision for ways in which the church reaches beyond itself in order to share the good news with the community.
2. Social Justice Action Ministries: Corporate actions on specific community and world issues, designed to get at the social justice roots of problems.
3. Community Resources: Development of relationships with allied helping agencies and professionals as an integrating force in community life.
4. Ecumenical, Interreligious, and Denominational Relations: Cooperative Planning among various religious organizations; the creative use of denominational resources and cooperation with general church efforts.

****Each Learning Covenant is required to have specific opportunities for Interns to:**

- perform a baptism
- plan and perform a holy union or wedding
- plan and perform a funeral or memorial service
- preach
- consecrate communion
- moderate a board of directors meeting
- help develop a congregational budget

Note: If all of the above are not anticipated to occur within the congregation or ministry context during the time of the internship, it is recommended that opportunities for “mock” events are created. The intern and supervisor are encouraged to be creative in developing a method for allowing the intern to prepare, write liturgy, and develop program plans for these important tasks of pastoral leadership.

LEARNING COVENANT

Due by end of second week of Internship

INSTRUCTIONS: *The purpose of this Learning Covenant are (a) to clarify what the intern seeks to learn in this internship, (b) to establish a plan for the intern’s ministry and how it will be supervised, and (c) to clarify expectations of the intern and supervisor. Following a discussion of what each party brings to the relationship (see “Worksheets for Building a Learning Covenant”), the intern and supervisor arrive at consensus about the terms of the covenant.*

Intern: _____ Dates of Internship: _____ to _____
beginning date ending date

Supervisor: _____

Congregation: _____
Name of Congregation/Ministry Context City/State

Part I. Goal Development

Learning Goals	Pastoral Activities	Plan for Supervision
List learning goals, achievable in this context, which can be applied in future ministry situations.	For each learning goal, state specific activities or strategies which will enable the intern to achieve that goal.	For each learning goal indicate ways the intern plans to present experiences or issues to the supervisor and/or committee.

Example: to identify my strengths and weaknesses for visiting with people in a variety of pastoral situations.

Examples:
 a) visit in hospital weekly
 b) visit shut-ins each Thursday

Example: I will present at least three verbatim or case studies out of my visits, and prepare a list of strengths/weaknesses.

Learning Covenant Template

Learning Goals List learning goals, achievable in this context, which can be applied in future ministry situations.	Pastoral Activities For each learning goal, state specific activities or strategies which will enable the intern to achieve that goal.	Plan for Supervision For each learning goal indicate ways the intern plans to present experiences or issues to the supervisor and/or committee.

Structure for Learning

Office Hours:

Days Off:

Dress Code:

Time and Place of Supervisor Conferences:

Specific Responsibilities of Intern not noted in Learning Goals:

Dates for Evaluation:

- Evaluation of Internship Structures and Relationships (due by end of fourth week):
Date _____
- Evaluation of Intern's Ministry (to be completed mid-year and during final week of internship):
Dates _____

This Learning Covenant is accepted by:

Supervisor's Signature Date

Intern's Signature Date

Moderator of Internship Committee's Signature Date

Copies of this Learning Covenant should be given to each of the following:

- Intern
- Supervisor
- Moderator of the Internship Committee
- Office of Formation and Leadership Development

The Internship Committee

Internship Committee Overview

There are four primary responsibilities of the Internship Committee. They represent challenges and opportunities in ministry with and to an intern. The effective fulfillment of these responsibilities depends upon the committee members bringing certain gifts of knowledge, qualities, and skills to their work.

A. Covenant-Building

1. Knowledge of and commitment to the church and its mission in the local congregation/ministry context, the community, the denomination, and the world;
2. Openness to the intern's unique gifts for ministry;
3. Ability to set realistic priorities;
4. Willingness to negotiate a mutually-agreeable covenant which includes the mission of the congregation and educational needs of the intern;
5. Capacity to be accountable and to hold others accountable.

B. Feedback

1. Familiarity with the intern's ministry through some personal participation in it;
2. Ability to think in a reflective rather than preconceived way;
3. Willingness to "level" (to share honest, constructive opinions);
4. Openness to learn as well as to teach (to receive as well as give);
5. Capacity to be patient.

C. Evaluation

1. Insightful about the growth process and open to the intern's growing edges;
2. Sensitivity to the values and opinions of others and a willingness to listen;
3. Capacity to deal with sensitive information in a confidential way;
4. Willingness both to challenge and affirm the intern;
5. Ability to help others arrive at responsible decisions.

D. Support

1. Sensitivity to the intern's human needs, academic responsibilities, and professional goals;
2. Concern for the intern's family;
3. Capacity to build and maintain trust relationships;
4. Willingness to share oneself both personally and spiritually;
5. Ability to enable the ministry of the whole People of God, both clergy and laity.

Purpose of the Committee

- **to provide support** to the intern; including
 - welcoming and facilitating their entry into the community;
 - interpreting to others in the congregation the role of the intern
 - being responsive to the human needs of the intern, such as accepting and affirming the intern when mistakes are made, celebrating new growth and insights that come; and
 - inviting the intern (and family, if applicable) into a common life and ministry.
- **to give feedback and evaluation** to the intern about their ministry, including:
 - monitoring progress in the learning covenant;
 - reflecting on specific events in the intern's ministry; and
 - providing constructive criticism about the intern's work, and
- **to explore the meaning** of their individual and corporate vocation, including:
 - reviewing the history and values of your congregation/ministry context;
 - sharing from your own personal faith journeys; and
 - examining together the issues and insights from your respective vocations.

Role of the Supervising Clergy with the Internship Committee

Supervising Clergy may wish to be present at some Committee meetings, but this is not necessary. To the contrary, the most effective supervisors encourage the contributions of the laity in the internship, and serve as a theological and process consultant for the work of the Committee. Beyond this, the most important role of the Supervising Clergy is to communicate to the Committee a sense of purpose, direction, support, and enthusiasm for their work.

Preparing the Committee

One of the most important tasks of the Supervising Clergy with the Committee comes prior to the actual beginning of the internship. The following are key steps in preparing this group for its work:

- (1) Identify and enlist the members of the Committee. Give special attention to the selection of the Moderator. The Board of Directors may function as the Internship Committee, if this is advisable given a congregation's context. If a separate Committee from the Board, which is recommended, the Committee should be affirmed by the Board of Directors of the local congregation.
- (2) Give handouts of materials that describe role and functions of the Internship Committee (including this manual) to each member of the Committee and encourage them to read this material prior to the first meeting.
- (3) Meet with the Committee Moderator prior to the first meeting to review handout material and to plan the work of the Committee. Clarify your role as resource person, and encourage the Moderator to assume their role as the group's leader.
- (4) At the first meeting of the Committee, communicate your support of their work, and help set a tone of mutual trust and openness.

Problems with the Committee

Ineffectiveness of the Internship Committee is most often linked to one or more of the following:

- The committee is unsure about their role in the internship;
- the committee meets too infrequently, so that trust and continuity never develop;
- the committee moderator has poor skills for leading the group or doesn't have a clear understanding of the task;
- the committee focuses too narrowly on giving feedback on sermons or other single tasks;
- the committee senses that the Supervising Clergy sees little value in their work;
- the intern and the committee moderator do not communicate prior to each meeting to prepare the agenda
- some committee members fail to follow-through on their commitment to serve.

Committee Composition and Function

(1) **Membership** –If the committee is not the Board of Directors, the committee is appointed by the Supervising Clergy and affirmed by the Board of Directors. The committee should be representative of a broad cross-section of the congregation. Attention to diversity in race, gender, age, sexuality, expertise, length of time/breadth of knowledge of the congregation/ministry context, etc. should be given.

(2) **Criteria for Selection** - Those selected to serve on the committee should be persons who:

- have a strong sense of their own life as ministry;
- are involved in and concerned about the congregation/ministry context;
- are willing to share personally and spiritually;
- are able to listen and ask questions; and
- are able to utilize educational processes.

(3) **The Moderator** of the committee should be a person with good group process skills and able to keep the committee focused. Neither the supervising clergy nor the intern should serve as moderator of the committee.

(4) **The Supervising Clergy** should help as a resource for the work of the committee, helping to organize the committee and suggesting helpful processes for the group's work. The Supervising Clergy should avoid being overly intrusive or dominating.

(5) **Frequency of Meetings.** It is recommended that the committee meet once prior to the beginning of the internship (organizational meeting) and again near the end of the internship to prepare a final evaluation. Beyond that, the committee should meet monthly for a year-long internship.

(6) **Confidentiality.** Members of the committee must take special care to see that sensitive information about the intern and others in the community is kept confidential. Failure to observe confidentiality can compromise the value of this important teaching/learning process and cause much pain.

(7) **Accountability.** The committee is responsible to the congregation, and it is appropriate that periodic reports be made to them.

Committee Meetings

Prior to the intern's arrival:

The organizational meeting of the committee, held prior to the beginning of the internship, should focus on several significant tasks:

- a. Review and organize the work of the committee
- b. Get to know each other better in order to function effectively as a team. Specific activities that may be found helpful for this task are:
 - (1) sharing briefly about yourself, your vocation, your current involvements in church and community;
 - (2) expressing what prompted you to serve on this committee.
- c. Discuss the following:
 - What does it feel like to be a member of this congregation? What are you most excited about? Frustrated about? What is it like to be a visitor here?
 - What do you see to be the main roles of the clergy? Of the laity? How are these different and similar?
 - What do lay persons have to offer to candidates through such a committee as this?
- d. Review what is expected of the intern.
- e. Make plans to welcome the intern to the congregation and to help them "get settled" in the new context.

Soon after the intern arrives:

The first meeting with the intern should take place as early as possible after the intern arrives, preferably in the first week. The agenda for this meeting should include:

- a. Reviewing the intern's learning covenant established by the supervising clergy and intern.
- b. Hearing the intern's life story and faith pilgrimage.
- c. Telling the intern (and each other) the story of recent history of the congregation.
- d. Establishing the dates of future committee meetings.

Ongoing meetings for study and reflection:

These meetings, scheduled at regular intervals throughout the internship, should focus on **one** of the following:

OPTION ONE: critical reflections on a specific ministry event e.g., a case study, a sermon, a lesson plan, or some other pastoral experience which raises questions or invites feedback

- a. When this agenda is selected, the intern should present a **written report in advance** to each member of the committee, including clearly stated questions the intern has about the event.
- b. In reviewing such events with the intern, members of the committee should utilize the “principles of effective feedback.”
- c. There is often a wide variety of issues which come into focus when discussing an intern’s report on pastoral events. The handout, “Basic Levels of Supervisory Concerns” may enable the committee to be conscious of these various concerns and to be more intentional about the direction of the reflections.

OPTION TWO: Critical reflections on the life and ministry of the congregation.

Although each congregation/ministry context is unique, there are several useful methods that may be utilized in understanding any congregation. Learning about your congregation will enable the intern to understand more about other ministry contexts they may serve in the future.

The Committee may want to ask the intern to submit for discussion a process paper in which they describe how they have witnessed and understand a specific way something is done in your congregation. Areas for process papers could include: worship planning, pastoral care, decision making, visitor follow up.

OTHER OPTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE’S AGENDA:

In addition to the items noted above, the committee should also include the following on its agenda:

-Monitoring the Learning Covenant – a periodical review of progress made by the intern on their learning goals.

-Identifying Learnings – conclude each meeting by asking everyone briefly to identify any new insights that have emerged from the discussions of that meeting.

-Praying together for each other, the congregation, the world.

The final meeting with the intern, scheduled near the end of the internship, is a time for the general evaluation of both the intern and the internship program.

- a. For the evaluation of the intern, the supervising clergy provides a comprehensive evaluation form. While it is the responsibility of the Supervising Clergy to complete this instrument, it is important for the committee to provide input into the evaluation process.
- b. For the evaluation of the internship program, the following may be helpful:

- (1) In what ways have we helped or hindered the intern in accomplishing their learning goals?

- (2) To what degree have we helped the intern to understand their responsibilities?
- (3) What contribution have we made to the intern's understanding the ministry of the laity?
- (4) How effective have we been in interpreting the purpose, goals, and process of the internship program to the congregation?
- (5) How effective have we been in "telling the truth in love" (feedback) and in providing personal support to the intern?
- (6) How effective have we been in helping the intern understand our congregation?
- (7) What changes would we make with future interns?
- (8) What have been our personal learnings and joys through the work of this committee?

The Supervisory Meeting

The Supervisory Meeting

Purpose

The Supervisory Meeting is a regularly scheduled, intentional time when the intern and supervisor come together to reflect critically upon the pastoral experiences of the intern and the life of the congregation. It is an indispensable element of the internship which distinguishes *supervised* ministry from other life experiences of the intern.

What the Supervisory Conference is not

- It is **not** primarily an **administrative meeting** for planning church activities and coordinating calendars...although this may be an appropriate way to begin or conclude.
- It is **not** primarily a **therapy session**...although the emotional dimensions of the intern's pastoral experiences are often appropriate aspects of the educational process.
- It is **not** primarily a **monologue** in which the intern listens passively while the supervisor tells about all of their former experiences...although the conference dialogue may appropriately include occasional references to such experiences.

Guidelines for the Supervisory Meeting

Schedule. A one-hour (minimum) Supervisory Meeting should be held once a week at a regularly scheduled time and place without constant interruptions. (Some of these meetings may take place using Skype or other distance communication options.)

Focus. The meetings are educational in nature, with the focus normally being on a specific act of ministry presented by the intern for theological reflection and critique.

Feedback. The principles of good feedback should be used in the supervisory meeting.

A Suggested Process for the Supervisory Meeting

Prior to the Meeting

- The intern prepares a written report of a pastoral event or series of events and submits this in advance to the supervisor.
- The supervisor and the intern independently examine this report and any notes made following the previous conference.

A Typical Meeting

Step 1. **Centering.** Entry time for “shifting gears” from other concerns so that both persons can focus on the agenda at hand.

Step 2. **Clarifying.** The content of the intern’s report is reviewed and the supervisor raises questions to clarify the content of the report.

Step 3. **Setting Priorities.** The intern identifies what they hope to learn from this event, indicating why this particular event was selected for discussion.

Step 4. **Analysis.** The intern’s report is analyzed in terms of why things happened as they did, and “what insights, feelings and theological issues have been generated by this experience of ministry.”

Step 5. **Identifying Learnings and Projecting.** The conference is concluded by identifying what learnings have emerged from these reflections, and by projecting about how this experience might inform future events in ministry.

(Design adapted from George Hunter, *Supervision and Education Formation for Ministry*, p. 28)

Following the Meeting the supervisor and intern should both record their own impressions of:

- how the intern functioned in this pastoral event, noting areas of needed growth and making recommendations for future learning and action;
- the feelings of the intern and supervisor which emerged in this conference, noting concerns about emotional growth and interpersonal relationships;
- any agenda which needs to be pursued in subsequent supervisory meetings.

Methods of Reporting

There are many useful methods of reporting events of ministry for review by the intern and the supervisor. Listed below are several methods that have been found to be especially helpful in the congregation-based internship.

- **Manuscripts.** The intern prepares copies of a sermon manuscript, a speech outline, or a lesson plan. Prior to the evaluation, the intern submits a copy of the written material to the supervisor so that they can be prepared in advance to discuss the event. In this method the evaluation focuses on content or organization.
- **Recordings.** Teaching events, sermons, and group meetings can be reviewed through the use of audio or video recordings. This method allows for consideration of both content and form, delivery, or process. It tends to arouse more defensiveness or anxiety in interns than many other forms, but it can be very helpful in understanding ministry experiences.
- **Observation Reports.** The intern reports as fully and concretely as possible, an event in which they were an observer, not an active participant or designated leader, e.g., a business meeting, a holy union or funeral, a network gathering or conference. This method permits a low-risk style of reporting which is centered on events led by others.
- **Verbatim Account.** In this method the intern writes as nearly as possible a word-for-word account of a pastoral conversation in which they engaged. The conversation is prefaced with a brief description of the circumstances and background of the person(s) involved; and it is followed by a brief evaluative summary. This method focuses on the subtleties of communication, and is a proven process for evaluating pastoral skills and interpersonal relationships.
- **Case Study.** The intern writes a one-page description of a critical event in ministry in which they were involved. Most frequently this involves an incident which raises an ethical or theological dilemma. This is a particularly good method for meetings with the Internship Committee.
- **Process Paper.** A process paper is a form of expository writing. You write a process paper to explain an idea, give directions on how to do something, compare two things or give directions to get somewhere. A process paper gives the reader a logical pathway to follow. The intern would write a process paper to describe their understanding of the way a particular ministry or activity is done.

Verbatim Report of a Pastoral Conversation

1. Known information about the person.

Who is this person and what critical information did you know about them before this encounter? (e.g., age? gender-identity? race? marital status? sibling rank? parents? children? religious beliefs? vocation? education? economic status? social concerns? political allegiance? Other?)

2. Observed information about the person.

What did you see, sense, feel about this person during the encounter? Examples:

- physical appearance
- the setting in which the conversation occurred?
- time of day?
- other person(s) around or involved?
- your initial impression: did you like or dislike this person? Did your feelings change?
- your affectual response: Was this person interesting, boring, attractive, repulsive, enjoyable, etc.? Did this person make you anxious? Did you find yourself engaged, turned-off, withdrawing, etc.?
- initiation and termination: who initiated this contact? How? Why? Who terminated it?
- how long did the encounter take?

3. Verbatim account of the pastoral conversation.

Recall not only what was said but use parenthesis to indicate what you observed of non-verbal communication in the person and/or what you felt during the encounter. Example:

M 1: Hello, I am Jane Doe, the intern pastor at First MCC. *(Felt anxious, first call of the day, standing before a man who had been stabbed by his lover.)*

P 1: Ugh. *(Did not really acknowledge me. Seemed drugged.)*

M 2: Are you uncomfortable? *(What else can I say? Am really anxious. Is he rejecting me?)*

P 2: Yeah. *(Eureka? He's in touch with himself and he acknowledged me. Now what?)*

4. Reflective assessment of the conversation.

- What did you hear: about this person's life-style, present needs, etc.?
- How do you now feel about this contact?
- What was the significance of the communication?
- If you could repeat this contact, what would you do differently?

5. Assessment of Ministry.

- What personal issues did this event raise for you?
- What about this conversation do you consider to be ministry?
-adapted from materials prepared by Jasper N. Keith

Examining Case Studies and Verbatims

When the intern presents a case study or verbatim, the following may be a helpful process to guide the reflections. It is recommended that these five stages be followed in this order. It is not necessary to explore each question listed under each stage; these are offered to illustrate the concerns of each stage.

1. **Informative Stage** – getting an accurate picture of the event or situation:
 - *What took place? What was the situation?*
 - *What was your role? How did you respond?*
2. **Evaluation Stage** – identifying the problem and/or what needs special attention:
 - *What emotions did you experience?*
 - *What are your feelings about this incident now?*
 - *How do you feel about the other people involved?*
 - *What are the key issues for you?*
3. **Theologizing Stage** – the meaning of this experience in light of religious tradition (scripture, theology, church history):
 - *What new insights do you have about self? human nature? church? the world? God?*
 - *At what point does your experience intersect with the biblical story? In what ways?*
 - *What does this have to say to you about ministry?*
4. **Resolution Stage** – exploring alternative ways of viewing the situation, and choosing one which seems most appropriate for this situation:
 - *What were realistic options that were available for you in this case?*
 - *What did you want to have happen in this situation?*
 - *How can the continuing situation best be confronted or handled?*
5. **Commitment Stage** – decision in terms of choosing a response for future ministry:
 - *What have you learned from this situation about ministry? about yourself?*
 - *What changes, if any, are in order?*
 - *What new skills or resources do you need to develop?*

Basic Levels of Supervisory Concern

Regardless of the method selected for reporting ministry experiences, there are at least five basic areas of concern appropriate for attention in a supervisory conference:

1. Professional Level – the more technical, skill-oriented level used to evaluate the intern’s abilities in preaching, teaching, pastoral care, etc. The supervisor or committee might ask questions such as:

- *In what ways was the intern effective in this particular act of ministry?*
- *What skills were used with competence?*
- *What skills were lacking?*

2. Interpersonal Level – the realm of human relationships.

- *How did the intern relate to other persons in this event?*
- *How did the intern deal with their own emotions in this event?*
- *How does the intern deal with conflict situations?*

3. Systemic Level – the way the intern demonstrates competence in working with organizations and social structures in the church and community.

- *In what ways did the intern exercise good leadership within the group?*
- *How did the intern demonstrate sensitivity to the expectations or traditions of the congregation/ministry context?*
- *How did the intern deal with any power struggles going on in this group?*

4. Theological Level – the way in which the intern integrates their theological understandings and convictions with the issues of ministry.

- *What theological questions emerge from this event? What doctrines are helpful for understanding this situation?*
- *Where does the intern see the activity of God in this event?*
- *What biblical events seem parallel to the event being reported by the intern? What ways are the two similar?*

5. Vocational Level – the intern’s emerging sense of vocational identity and spiritual formation.

- *What did the intern learn from this experience about a call to ministry?*
- *What concept of ministry is suggested by the way the intern functioned?*
- *How comfortable was the intern in exercising pastoral authority?*
- *How has this experience helped the intern understand their spiritual life?*

It is not necessary for all five levels to be discussed in every supervisory conference. Some reports will point to only one or two levels where growth is of critical importance; other reports will beg for dialogue at all five levels. Nevertheless, being aware of these various levels can be very constructive in building the agenda for the conference.

Feedback

Feedback is specific commentary on what one observes about the intern and the way they do ministry. It involves describing to the intern how their behavior is seen and how it affects others. The ultimate purpose of feedback is to help the intern become more self-aware and more effective in ministry.

1. Feedback is *not* useful if it is used to punish the intern, “to get something off our chest,” or to show superiority over the intern.
2. Both *positive* and *negative* feedback are important. The intern can grow by hearing about positive contributions as well as their mistakes.
3. Characteristics of good feedback:
 - a. **It is descriptive** rather than judgmental. Avoiding judgmental language reduces the defensiveness of the intern.
 - b. **It is specific** rather than general. To describe the intern as “bossy” or “domineering” is not as useful as it is to say, “This morning when you were leading the class discussion, you appeared to be disturbed by the direction of the discussion.”
 - c. **It is timely.** In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after a given event of ministry. The intern who is described as “lacking initiative” has less opportunity to learn from feedback than the intern who is told, “Yesterday when we were meeting with the Committee you seemed very reluctant to contribute your own ideas or concerns.”
 - d. **It is checked to ensure clear communication.** One good way to check for clarity is to ask the intern to rephrase the feedback to see if they have heard what was actually said.
 - e. **It is directed primarily at the intern’s behavior.** Feedback about personality can be ego-destructive and needs to be done with more sensitivity.

-Adapted from Nicholas VanDyck, “Supervision in Theological Field Education: Shaping a Person-Oriented Working Relationship,” Theological Education, Vol. XII, No. 4, pp 236-244

Common Problems for Supervisors

1. Being **negative**, focusing only on telling the intern what they are doing wrong, ignoring what is being done effectively.
2. Using **confrontation** only when a crisis has developed, not as a constructive way of teaching and caring.
3. **Avoiding supervision**; limiting supervision only to assigning tasks, coordinating programs, and working without engaging in reflection.
4. Playing role of **psychotherapist**. (Supervision does consider aspects of the intern's behavior, but it is not appropriate to blend supervision and therapy, even when the supervisor is a trained therapist.)
5. Focusing only on **skill development**, ignoring the more comprehensive nature of the intern's preparation for ministry or development of pastoral identity.
6. Failing to keep **confidences**.
7. Occupying the intern only with **busy work** or making **unreasonable** demands of the intern.
8. Using **authority** inappropriately either (a) failing to exercise authority and being a "pushover" who is afraid of hurting the intern's feelings, or (b) acting in a highly authoritarian mode which generally leads to the intern's resentment and the deterioration of the supervisor-intern relationship.
9. Focusing only on expressed theological language and ignoring the intern's **internalized theology**.

-adapted from Doran McCarty,
Supervising Ministry Students

Supervisors are also encouraged to be aware of the **power dynamics of race, class, gender and ethnicity** in working with interns. The following resources are highly recommended:

The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches, Christie Cozad Neuger, Editor

Shaping Spiritual Leaders: Supervision and Formation in Congregations by Abigail Johnson

God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences by William Kondrath

Understanding Race, Ethnicity and Power by Elaine Pinderhughes

Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith by Justin Tanis

Evaluations

Evaluations

Evaluation is an important part of the learning experience. Helpful evaluation will enable an intern to build on skills while recognizing and working on areas in which they are less proficient. It may be helpful for evaluators to ask these questions of themselves:

- What are the characteristics of useful evaluations that people have done of you?
- What has not been helpful?

What are the purposes of evaluation?

- To teach the intern to make effective use of *self-appraisal* throughout a lifetime of ministry.
- To help the intern discern the wisdom of their *vocational choice* to enter ordained ministry. (In some cases it may serve as a confirmation of one's call to ministry; in others, it may guide the person to other forms of Christian service.)
- To provide a means by which the intern is *accountable* for their service in the congregation, certifying that the intern has met the requirements of the internship and denomination.

What is being evaluated?

- The intern's progress toward mutually *established goals* in the learning covenant.
- The intern's *effectiveness* in specific aspects of ministry.
- The intern's *strengths and needs* for further development. This should be comprehensive, including concern for
 - professional formation
 - spiritual formation
 - pastoral identity
 - vocational clarity
 - skills for interpersonal relations, social analysis, and theological discernment.
- The intern's *ability to integrate* experience with theory, private convictions with public actions, and individual discipleship with life in the spiritual community.

What kind of process is used in evaluating the intern?

- It should be both *descriptive* and *prescriptive*.
- It should be part of an *ongoing process*, not a final judgment, and should encourage continued, life-long self-assessment. Optimally, the final evaluation report will contain no surprises to the intern.

- It should reflect a mutually trustworthy relationship and interpersonal sensitivity between supervisor and intern. It should be *dialogical* in nature.
- It should be *candid* and *honest*, not given only to superlatives.
- It should demonstrate *sensitivity* to racial/ethnic and gender differences between the supervisor and intern.
- It should be preceded by an open discussion of the *images* of the “successful pastor” which are brought to the assessment process by both the supervisor and the intern.

Who prepares the evaluation reports?

The supervising clergy is responsible for guiding the process—considering input from the intern and the Internship Committee—preparing the report, and submitting the evaluation report toward endorsement of the candidate for ordination.

For whom are the evaluation reports prepared?

The evaluation report is prepared primarily for the intern to foster their own growth and development in ministry.

Secondarily, the report is prepared for endorsement of candidate for ordination. Regardless of the forms that are used for the final evaluation, a 3-5 page narrative summary evaluation must be supplied along with the interns application for ordination, which is reviewed by the ordination interview team.

Schedule for the Evaluation Process

- **At the end of four weeks** – the supervisor and intern complete the *Evaluation of Internship Structure and Relationships* (see Appendix)
- **Mid-Year** – the supervisor submits to the intern and Internship Committee a mid-year evaluation of the intern’s work (reviewed and signed by intern prior to being submitted.) See Appendix.
- **During the last week of the internship** – the supervisor submits a final evaluation of the intern’s work. Input from the Internship Committee is encouraged. The evaluation is reviewed and signed by the intern prior to being submitted. (See Appendix) This final report should guide the local church Board of Directors in making an informed endorsement of the candidate for ordination.
- **At the conclusion of the internship** – the Intern submits an Internship Site/Supervisor Evaluation to the OFLD. This allows the intern to provide candid feedback about the internship from their perspective, which the OFLD uses as background information as it advises future interns about potential sites/supervisors.

The Element of Trust in Evaluating Relationships

The elements that will make for a trust relationship are:

1. Shared ownership of the process by all parties involved.
2. Clarified expectations and realistic priorities for what is to be accomplished.
3. Common training for all of the members of the Internship Committee, the supervising clergy, and the intern.
4. Adequate time together for both getting acquainted and working together:
 - a. Monthly meetings are absolutely essential.
 - b. Short worship experiences that highlight common understandings and openness could be developed.
 - c. Informal, non-working time is encouraged.
5. Starting on a low risk level of feedback and moving to high-risk level.

Sample Forms

Evaluations of Internship Structure and Relationships

To be completed at the end of the first four weeks of Internship

Intern: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Congregation/City: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: *At the end of four weeks of supervised ministry, the intern and supervisor should review the state of the internship. Both should complete the questionnaire independently. The two then meet, review their respective evaluations, and discuss differences of opinion or problems. Where differences of opinion or problems emerged, interpretive comments are encouraged.*

Check one:

Evaluation by Supervisor

Evaluation prepared by Intern

1. The **expectations** for the internship are clear to both Intern and Supervisor.

Intern: Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____

Supervisor: Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____

Areas of confusion:

2. The **goals and strategies** set forth in the Learning Covenant appear to be appropriate for the intern's growth.

Not helpful 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Appropriate

Unrealistic 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Achievable

3. The work opportunities **for the intern are meaningful** for the intern's formation in ministry, and are relevant to sensed needs of the congregation.

Not meaningful to intern 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Meaningful to intern

Not relevant 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Relevant

4. The intern has a clear sense of his or her **responsibilities** for ministry.

Responsibilities not clear 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Responsibilities are clear

5. Supervisory Conferences...

(a) are held at a **regular time** each week/month
never 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ always

(b) are conducted **without frequent interruptions**
never 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ always

(c) have been **mutually beneficial**
not 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ very
beneficial beneficial

(d) have made use of **written reports** submitted by the intern in advance (check one response)
never _____ occasionally _____ always _____

6. The Internship Committee...

(a) is adequately **staffed**
yes _____ no _____

(b) has a clear sense of its **purpose**
not 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ very
clear clear

(c) has established a **schedule** for future meetings
yes _____ no _____

7. **Communication** between the intern and supervisor is open and honest.
seldom 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ always

8. Other concerns or issues which need attention:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mid-Year Evaluation

Name of Intern _____

Name of Supervisor _____

Name of Congregation _____

Both Supervisor and Intern must sign and date the evaluation.

Both the Supervisor and Intern should respond to the questions below in writing. Include concrete examples in support of your statements.

At this mid-point in your program, where do you find the greatest sense of accomplishment and satisfaction? Respond to this question bearing in mind the goals and objectives of the Learning Covenant.

Where have you come upon the greatest challenges and difficulties in accomplishing the tasks of your internship and in your theological reflections?

Comment on the relationship between the intern, supervisor and intern committee. Have these relationships and meetings been timely, clear, open and useful?

Have you made any decisions to change your plans or re-negotiate the Learning Covenant? If so, please discuss this.

Do you need additional support from the Office of Formation and Leadership Development?

Do you have any additional comments?

The signatures below indicate both parties have answered the above questions and discussed their answers.

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Intern _____ Date _____

Final Evaluation

Name of Intern _____

Name of Supervising Clergy _____

Name of Congregation _____

Dates of Internship _____

Both Supervisor and Intern must sign and date the evaluation.

Both the Supervisor and Intern should respond to the questions below in writing. Include concrete examples in support of your statements.

Describe the Intern's relationship to the congregation.

Describe the progress made on each of the learning objectives of the Learning Covenant.

Describe the nature of the weekly supervisory sessions and agenda items typically covered.

What have been the Intern's strengths and growth areas in this internship experience? How has the Intern received and made use of constructive criticism and feedback?

What personal or professional issues does the Intern need to continue working on their ongoing vocational preparation?

Describe the Intern's general readiness for ordained ministry.

Additional comments about the Internship.

The signatures below indicate both parties have answered the above questions and discussed their answers.

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Intern _____ Date _____

Sermon Feedback Form

Can be used by Supervising Clergy or Internship Committee

Name of Preacher_____

Name of Evaluator_____

Date of Sermon_____

1 = Needs Improvement; 2 = Satisfactory; 3 = Excellent; 4 = not applicable

Content of Sermon

Appropriate use of Scripture 1 2 3 4

Appropriate use of Tradition 1 2 3 4

Effective connections with human experience
1 2 3 4

Clear sermon point 1 2 3 4

Organization of Sermon

Opening 1 2 3 4

Development 1 2 3 4

Use of language/illustration 1 2 3 4

Conclusion 1 2 3 4

Length and quantity 1 2 3 4

Delivery of Sermon

Effective use of voice, volume, diction, pace
1 2 3 4

Secured audience attention 1 2 3 4

Freedom from manuscript/notes
1 2 3 4

Outcome of Sermon

As proclamation of God's Word to this community
1 2 3 4

As inspiration and challenge to attitudes/behaviors
1 2 3 4

As source of relevant information	1	2	3	4
As impact upon one's faith/spiritual journey	1	2	3	4
As provocative of further reflection	1	2	3	4
As an integral part of worship/liturgy	1	2	3	4

Narrative responses from evaluator:

I understood the purpose/ point of this sermon was:

This sermon raised the following questions/issues which are important to me:

I want to offer the following advice and suggestions to the preacher so that they might continue to grow in effectiveness as a preacher:

ADDITIONAL FORMS: All official OFLD Forms can be found on the Forms & Manuals page of the OFLD Website (<http://ofld.mcccchurch.org/clergy/forms-manuals/>). This includes forms for incoming clergy (e.g. MAP Progress Reports, Application for Ordination, Evaluation of Internship Site/Supervisor, etc.) as well as for Supervising Clergy. Please contact us if you have any questions, and make sure to download the most recent version of any form just prior to submitting it.

Appendix:

Top Tips from the Field

Being the Best Supervising Clergy You Can Be

Top Tips from the Field

In early 2016, we convened some of the most experienced MCC Supervising Clergy for a meeting, during which they shared their “Top Tips” for making an internship successful. In other words, we asked them what they would name as things that “Must” be done, or “Must not” be done in an internship. The following list (in no particular order) contains their wisdom:

General Attitudes/Approaches/Considerations:

- Hold in mind the idea of mutuality, the community and supervisor has gifts to share with the intern, but the intern also has gifts to offer both the supervisor and the community.
- Come to an understanding that the internship is a mutual experience where supervisors and interns learn. Experiences from both are valuable resources and can be uplifting to both. It may be helpful to have some discussions about what it means to be in the role of a student vs. supervisor and/or how these might shift over time.
- Recognize when you or your community are not clicking with an intern and allow them to find other opportunities elsewhere.
- Must create a safe space where the intern can raise issues as they come up, including emotional aspects of experience. Create a space where you can work through difficult issues. Make it OK for any question to be asked.
- Help interns recognize and claim their strengths, and support them to grow in their weaknesses.
- What are the underlying currents/politics of church life (issues that might influence people’s takes on things). Focus on the multiple versions and perspectives on each issue.
- Focus on Pastoral Identity Development. Help intern focus and express identity in their own way (not copying someone else, not being or acting like they think people expect them to, but finding a way to authentically bring themselves and their gifts to the role of pastor). It can be helpful to ask questions like, “How do you see yourself? Who are you? What is your sense of pastoral identity?”
- Supervisors should be actively involved in the discernment process with interns, helping to guide them and give critical feedback if pastoral ministry may NOT be their calling. Some supervisors may need to help re-direct to chaplaincy, social service/justice work, or another form of vocation that is more suitable to someone’s gift and calling.
- Must spend time talking about “the call” to pastoral ministry throughout the internship, as it changes.
- Be aware of how an intern’s personal life is affected by internship, attend to this as necessary and helpful. This can be a great opportunity for wholistic learning and lessons about balance.

- Consider doing a longer internship – 2 years. Year 1 focusing on a strength or a weakness that needs to be developed; Year 2 focuses on the fullness of pastoral life. Consider having a practical clergy group (with other interns if there are any, and utilizing other staff, if available) that focuses on some specifics—i.e. how to do a funeral, etc.

Specific Practices for Supervisors:

- Must do a commissioning/blessing at the start of the internship involving the entire community. Also include a blessing/rite of release at the end of an internship to honor the end of this phase of the relationship and to name some of the blessings that have come through it.
- Don't rush through the time of goal setting in the learning covenant. Be very clear about what people want and need to learn, and make these priorities.
- When forming an internship committee, consider giving them conflict on purpose. More specifically, put a person on the committee who is challenging and some people who disagree often (but nicely) about theology, style, etc. Don't avoid giving conflict as it can be a great learning/practice opportunity for how things are in the real world of church work.
- If your church is large or in some other way unique in terms of what will be likely placements for an intern, work with other churches to allow interns to interact with smaller and/or more standard types of congregational settings. It's fine to allow part of an intern's time to be spent in other congregations so that their reflection and learning can include this type of experience.
- Make sure that there are agendas for committee meetings and supervisory sessions, even if it's only one item. There should be intentionality and in-depth work being done during meetings.
- Communicate regularly with interns and address any situation that arises quickly and effectively.
- Deal swiftly and directly with conflict.
- Supervisors must be willing to say no.
- Use teachable moments. If something happens, pull the intern aside and talk a little bit about it right away, then expound later. Don't save things up and dump on them at the end of each week, for example.
- Create a rotation schedule (month at a time) so the intern can have a constant experience of doing something in worship for an extended period of time to concentrate experience and reflection – vs. hodge podge of experiences without focus.
- Must pray together.
- Must provide some type of financial support, even if only a stipend or fees.
- Create a real “Practice Lab” where the intern and supervisor can dig deep and have hard conversations about the practice of ministry. Move beyond a “check list” and find ways to navigate the stormy waters that are a real part of ministry in a spirit of love.
- Be sure to engage in theological conversations with the interns as they are developing, especially if in their first couple of years of seminary.

- Allow interns an opportunity to present sermons to you (supervisor) or a small group before preaching to the congregation. Allow a chance
- Try to share with intern the what is most challenging to the supervisor. Allow the challenge areas to be places of conversation/instruction.
- Spend time (an hour or two a week) having conversations with interns about the “Why” of doing things, and not just the “How.” Notice the things that are being done in worship, in board meetings, in communication, etc. and take the time to talk about why certain choices are made and not others. This can be a highly contextual learning exercise.
- Help interns to hone their pastoral “instinct” about how to make choices. Interns can’t be prepared for every eventuality, but their capacity for critical thinking, discernment, and decision-making can be increased.
- Emphasize the weekly one-hour time with the supervisor that focuses on them and what they’re doing and the issues that are emerging for them, versus monitoring them.
- Create opportunities to do a “Mock” funeral, wedding, baptism, blessing, etc. if these aren’t happening in the life of the congregation during the internship. The intern can be given a scenario and do everything about these, including talking through a pre-rite counseling session, crafting the liturgy, and even walking through the event for evaluation and feedback.
- Watch for where interns take initiative and when they don’t; engage this as a topic for discussion. (Do they sense and respond to needs that are beyond their assigned tasks?)
- Mirror back to interns what their growing edges are. Push through discomfort and engage in hard conversations. Make sure that the reservations or criticisms that are likely to come from ordination interview teams or future congregants have been discussed first by you. This is a gift to the intern.
- Stay current on all of the requirements and paperwork needed for seminary and the Office of Formation and Leadership Development. Have the interns be accountable about due dates, etc.
- Keep good documentation. Write things down, especially critical feedback. This becomes helpful for your final narrative evaluation and can also add strength to your feedback when you give specifics.
- Contact the OFLD if you have any questions at all during the internship or if we can provide conversation or resources that will assist you as a supervisor or with your specific internship situations.