

## Lay Internship Committee Guide

*Thank you!*

Lay Internship Committees normally serve without remuneration, accolade, and sometimes even without a word of thanks from the congregation. We want you to know that we believe your work to be invaluable and a significant contribution to the preparation of future pastors. **We are truly grateful to you for your commitment to this important work.**

You will experience many rewards through this year: the reward of knowing you have influenced the formation of a future pastor of our church, the reward of knowing and loving the student assigned to your congregation, and the knowledge that you have a part in the mission of the church. We hope that you and your intern will enjoy a fruitful and blessed year together.

### What is a lay internship committee?

The lay internship committee is a small group of five to eight people, meeting monthly with the intern, who have agreed to develop a supportive relationship with the intern. You will learn, grow and struggle together as you help each other develop your unique ministry.

In addition to meeting your committee for monthly conversations, the intern will be talking to your pastor on a regular basis. The pastor has special skills and knowledge the intern needs to acquire. Your pastor's perspective is important to the intern, but it cannot replace yours.

Lay internship committees also participate in the **evaluation process**. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to submit an online evaluation form twice a year. However, the entire committee is expected to participate in the evaluation process by giving the chair their opinions in response to the evaluation questions.



## The Laos, God's people

For a moment, think about your congregation, your pastor and the intern who will soon arrive from the seminary. Who are you as an internship committee? What does it mean to be an intern? How can you and your pastor work with the intern as partners in the ministry? How can everyone grow in grace as God's people?

Begin by affirming a common identity. You are the people of God, claimed by God through baptism and the Word. God calls every Christian into ministry, a concept clearly expressed by the author of I Peter 2:9. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

All baptized people have a place within God's body, the church; we all share in the ministry. But we experience that ministry in different ways. Paul emphasizes this point in Romans 12:6-8.

"So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority, should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully."

The Lutheran Church affirms the "priesthood of all believers," stressing the unity of our ministry in the midst of our diversity. In that diversity, some—the clergy—are called to administer the word and sacraments and are held responsible for that office. But the ordained ministry is not separated from the rest of God's people. We are all the *laos*, the Greek word which means God's people.

As one who is preparing for ordained ministry, your intern needs you. As members of the internship committee, you have a valuable perspective to share with the intern. For example, the church is both a gathered and a scattered community. We gather, we worship and learn and participate in the programs of the congregation. But most of the week we are scattered into the various segments of society where each Christian works in the world. Each of us as baptized Christians seeks to find wholeness in the expression of our faith within the demands of our vocation.

## Vocational differences

Ministry is faith, active in love, attempting to respond to the needs of the world. The way in which you do your ministry and live out your faith is important not only for yourself but also for the whole people of God. Your willingness to share your life at this point can be invaluable for the intern's preparation for the ordained ministry.

But some differences need to be remembered. How does our vocation affect the way we function? We do not want to draw the lines too sharply, but here are some general observations about our functions.

### Pastors

- Focus on the gathered community (at the church)
- Proclaim the Gospel
- Administer the sacraments and proclaim the Gospel
- Remind us of who we are in Christ
- Equip the saints for ministry

- Together with the laity, develop and implement a vision for mission

## Laity

- Focus on the "ordained creation" (in the world)
- Act as good stewards of all God's gifts
- Witness to our identity as followers of Christ
- Exercise our ministry in the world

These are some of the distinctions we can make in the functions of called Christians. But one point of contact unites us as God's people. We work together as partners serving God and responding to God's grace.

## The Church's expectations

As an internship committee you are involved in the preparation of candidates for the ordained ministry. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has stated its expectations of its ordained ministers in a statement entitled *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Church in America*.



That document uses the four questions addressed to candidates in the Rite of Ordination to frame the discussion about expectations. These four questions can also provide a helpful framework for your work with your intern, as she/he seeks to become the kind of person prepared to engage in the public ministry of the church:

- Before almighty God, to whom you must give account, and in the presence of this congregation, I ask: Will you assume this office, believing that the Church's call is God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament?
- The church in which you are to be ordained confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge that the Lutheran Confessions are true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions?
- Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and in your use of the means of grace? Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?
- Will you give faithful witness to the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

## Committee Roles

The Lay Intern Committee has a unique perspective. You can tell the intern about life as you experience it and the challenges you face. You can tell the intern how well he or she is equipping you for your ministry. With loving concern, you can tell the intern about his or her rough edges or weaknesses. We don't always

perceive ourselves as others do; someone who honestly describes our behavior can be invaluable. Share your story of faith and your style of ministry.

Take time to ask the intern what he/she needs from the members of the committee. Similarly the committee can help the intern learn what the expectations of the congregation are.

## Committee Member Term Limits

We suggest that committee members serve three-year terms, with one-third of the committee in rotation each year. There should be a new members or two on the committee each year, but try to keep some continuity by retaining a few experienced committee members each year.

## Selection of Committee Members

**It is important that the Supervising Pastor appoint the members of the Lay Intern Committee**, with ratification of the church council.



- Supervisors should choose people with whom they are comfortable; who can give fair and open-minded consideration to the intern's experiences; and who will support the intern, while also being supportive of the intern's relationship with their supervisor.
- Committee members should be active church goers, involved in congregational life, and who are committed to observing the student in ministry.
- The committee should be comprised of capable people from a cross section of the congregation. Women and men, youth, middle-aged persons, singles and married persons, and older members should be represented as much as possible.

## What Roles Do Committee Members Play?

1. **Supporter**  
You provide counsel and encouragement for the intern and his or her spouse. You provide support and honest feedback - something that everyone needs.
2. **Sponsor**  
You are able to acquaint the intern with the members of the congregation and the issues and concerns of the people.
3. **Consultant**  
You can provide information about the congregation, teach, guide, and introduce the intern to

your world. You help make sure the intern knows the audience on Sunday morning and something of the history of your church and community.

4. **Evaluator**

You are a mirror, reflecting your perception of ministry toward the intern. You will offer your impressions of sermons, personal appearance, teaching skills, etc. Don't gloss over things; be honest as you speak the truth in love.

5. **Faith Sharer**

You can share your own religious background, experiences and beliefs. Tell the intern how God has called you and what that has meant.

6. **Ministry Partner**

You can assist the intern in developing a style of ministry that is in partnership with other Christians. We want a pastor who can work well in partnership with others, not some sort of lone ranger. The intern must know how the roles of a pastor and a lay person complement each other, and how he/she can effectively function in partnership with others.

## The Chairperson

Each committee should have a chairperson whose responsibilities include the following:

- a. Convene all committee meetings.
- b. Notify everyone as to the time and place of meetings and chair them.
- c. Discuss the agenda with the intern and/or pastor.
- d. Consult with the pastor supervisor as appropriate, as the committee seeks to do its work.
- e. Fill out the final consensus evaluation.

## Key Issues Facing the Committee

Our experience with internship committees leads us to make a few observations about how you function. If you want to be effective, here are some key points to remember:

1. Remember that the intern is a student. Don't expect an experienced pastor, or assume that he/she will know all about your congregation. The purpose of an internship is to enable students to learn from supervised experience and reflection. The needs of the congregation must be recognized, but interns are placed with the objective of learning. The committee should always ask first, "What will the intern learn in this situation?"
2. Confidentiality is vital. In order for people to feel free to engage in frank and honest discussion, committee members and interns need to feel that what is said in the committee meeting stays in the committee meeting.
3. Be concerned about the whole life of the intern. How are the spouse and family doing? Is the apartment or home adequate? Does the intern have some time for personal needs? Who will

introduce the intern to the congregational members? What feelings are coming to the surface in the intern and in the congregation?

4. Be honest. It doesn't help to compliment a poor sermon or an inept presentation. Many interns want the lay committee to give them feedback. Speak the truth in love, but speak the truth. Do not hold back vital information because you want to spare the intern's feelings. Don't be paternalistic, or try to shelter the intern from difficulties. It's the uncomfortable feelings that need to be discussed.
5. Respect differences. Your intern will be unique, not at all like the last intern or the present pastor. As congregations are distinctive, so also interns will differ. Don't put people in a mold or stereotype.
6. Affirm your lay ministry. No one need preface his/her comments with "I'm only a lay person, but..." Your views are important, and you need not denigrate your ministry.
7. Organize the committee well:
  - a) For a more relaxed atmosphere, try meetings that are hosted by committee members in their homes.
  - b) Work with the intern in setting the agenda.
  - c) Set a time when the meetings will end.
  - d) Set a fixed day of the month for a regular meeting.
  - e) Outline what is expected in the way of refreshments.
  - f) Clarify how members will be informed about meeting times and places.
8. Avoid:
  - a) dominating the discussion
  - b) talking about someone not present
  - c) bemoaning a situation in the parish
  - d) complaining about things the intern or committee can't change
  - e) sidetracking the agenda and discussing unrelated concerns
  - f) relating only on a superficial level
9. Remember that your relationship to the supervising pastor is complementary. The committee should not assume an adversarial role toward the supervisor or toward the student.
10. Be concerned about the ongoing internship program. Insure the future health of the program with some good long-range plans. Be an advocate for the internship program in your congregation and in the church.

## Monthly Meetings

Give your monthly meetings high priority. The intern and the committee function as a team; when the team member misses frequently or fails to participate, the whole effort suffers. In terms of what will happen in your congregation over the next year, your committee is probably second only



to the church council in impact. An agenda is suggested for each month.

Specifically, you will be asked to participate in developing and reviewing the intern's Learning Goals and to fill out evaluation forms mid-year and at the end of the year. You will want to examine the broad range of ministry in the congregation, critically react to the intern's ministry, and deal with some housekeeping tasks. The suggested agendas will provide more concrete guidance.

Use the following suggestions as guidelines but feel free to shape agendas to reflect your context more accurately.

### **Prior to the Intern's Arrival**

- Meet with the supervising pastor to organize, review materials from the seminary, and select a person who will serve as chair.
- Exchange telephone numbers and addresses with the intern in order to maintain contact over the summer months.
- Does the intern's spouse need employment? Can you help?
- Check on the physical arrangements for the intern and family. Is the housing adequate, clean and ready? Will the intern need help unloading and moving in?
- Send information to the student while he/she is still at the seminary, so that advance information about the home, community, and congregation is provided. In a small community you might want to publish an announcement of the intern's arrival in the local newspaper.
- Insure a good start for the student by planning a food shower or welcome. First impressions are important. Don't overlook the spouse. Plan a "Rite of Beginning" for a worship service. ([Sample](#))

### **Month One**

1. Welcome the intern, help him/her get settled and acquainted. Perhaps arrange for a guided tour of the parish and community. Include the intern's family.
2. Schedule the first committee meeting at which you:
  - a. start introducing the committee members, asking each to share their story of faith.
  - b. talk about possible learning experiences available and needs of the congregation and student. Narrow down areas to be mentioned in the Learning Goals.
  - c. be sensitive to the role of the spouse. Invite the spouse to a social gathering of the committee; or perhaps to attend the first or second meeting, if he/she wants to come, but don't insist on it.
3. A time for sharing concerns may be a helpful monthly ritual.

### **Month Two**

1. Check on housing and personal needs, including spouse's concerns.
2. Discuss the transition from seminary to church institution.
3. Review and formalize with the pastor and intern the Learning Goals. Interns are to send a copy to the seminary. The internship project should be discussed at this time as well.
4. Talk about the agenda for the rest of the year.

### **Month Three**

1. Use the [Sermon Listener's Feedback Guide](#) as a tool for reflection on the intern's development as a preacher.
2. Allow time for committee members to discuss what they expect or wish in a sermon.
3. Preview the mid-year evaluation questions. (Found at the end of this document.)

#### **Month Four**

1. Evaluate the intern's development in worship leadership and preaching.
2. Discuss ways of evaluating the intern's teaching. Will you talk to students or participate in a class? The group should discuss the teaching role and the importance of the teaching ministry. Plan an evaluation for the next meeting.
3. You may be in the holiday season now. Will the intern be alone for Thanksgiving and Christmas? That's normally a lonely time for families who are accustomed to gathering.
4. Continue previewing mid-year evaluation.

#### **Month Five**

1. Evaluate the teaching ministry.
2. Finish reviewing the midyear forms and offer explanations in preparation for completing the forms.
3. Re-read and discuss the Key Issues Facing the Committee, found earlier in this document.

#### **Month Six**

1. Decide how your committee will complete the mid-year evaluation by consensus. You may want each individual member to write out their answers to the questions (see the end of this document) and have the committee chair combine the answers into one.
2. The chair will fill out the mid-year evaluation form online, and review it with the intern.
3. Check the Learning Goals. Do they need revision?
4. Discuss, reflect and evaluate your relationship to the other congregations in your area and your response to social concerns.
5. Plan an evaluation of the pastoral visitation activity of the intern. Why is it important? How can both lay and clergy minister to the shut-in, the sick, and the troubled? Plan to evaluate this aspect of ministry at your next meeting.

#### **Month Seven**

1. Discuss the feedback from the midyear evaluation forms.
2. Evaluate pastoral visitation, ministry to the elderly, the sick, etc.
3. Plan ways to explore the administrative role of a pastor. What are the congregational needs in parish administration? Maybe it would be helpful to invite the parish secretary to this meeting.
4. Make any necessary adjustments to the learning service agreement.

#### **Month Eight**

1. Evaluate the administrative dimensions of the internship.

2. Discuss the role of the clergy in the broader Christian community. What is your congregation's relationship to the other churches in the community? How does your congregation relate to the Synod and Churchwide? Examine social ministry opportunities in your community.

### **Month Nine**

1. Discuss, reflect and evaluate your relationship to the other congregations in your area and your response to social concerns.
2. Review the past months. Summer plans are likely being made and the pastor will schedule vacation. Will the intern have additional responsibilities when the pastor is on vacation? Will there be youth retreats? Be sure to cover the broad range of ministry by the end of the year.
3. By now the intern will be fairly free to organize work and to operate independently. Discuss how one plans work, sets priorities, and operates under great freedom.
4. Discuss the ministry of lay people as it relates to the ordained minister.

### **Month Ten**

1. This may be a good month for a social outing.
2. If the intern is married, discuss how congregational members relate to a pastor's spouse and the expectations they may have of her/him.
3. Discuss how the presence of the intern has impacted the congregation.
4. Look at the final evaluation forms.

### **Month Eleven**

1. Discuss the role of the spouse with the intern, or what it has been like to be a single person in the community.
2. Plan a "Rite of Ending" for the intern. ([Sample](#).) Talk about leave-taking issues, the importance of ending well, and the significance of transitions in the life of a pastor.
3. Decide how your committee will complete the final evaluation by consensus. You may want each individual member to write out their answers to the questions (see the end of this document) and have the committee chair combine the answers into one.

### **Month Twelve**

1. The chair will fill out the final evaluation form online, and review it with the intern.
2. Evaluate the total function of your committee. How did the committee respond to the presence of the intern? What could be improved? Were any issues not addressed? Do you have advice for the next internship committee or advice for the Contextual Learning staff of the seminary?
3. Say goodbye in a personal way and participate in the "Rite of Ending" during the intern's last worship service.
4. You may want to organize a farewell reception for the intern and family.

## **Evaluation Questions for the Mid-year and Final Evaluation Forms**

The Lay Internship Committee is required to submit a consensus evaluation of the intern twice a year. In order to facilitate discussion and consensus amongst the committee members, the evaluation questions are displayed below. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to collate the group's responses and complete the actual evaluation online. **The form must be submitted online.**

The questions are the same on both the Mid-year and the Final evaluation forms. However, the final evaluation form will have a two-point ranking on each of the first section questions. These two rankings are simply "competent" and "not yet competent." Keep in mind that the description part of the question is far more important than the ranking.

### ***Section 1 Questions:***

#### **Assessment of Skills Needed for Pastoral Leadership: Competency Levels**

##### A. Leading Worship

Consider the intern's poise and presence, voice and language as s/he reads scripture, leads prayer and conducts liturgy.

##### B. Preaching

Consider biblical interpretation, connection to the congregation/community, use of illustrations and organizational clarity, as well as delivery of sermons.

##### C. Teaching Adults

Consider teaching methods, including the ability to facilitate discussion and create a comfortable learning environment, as well as the quality, depth and presentation of concepts.

##### D. Teaching Youth and Children

Consider both material and presentation for various age groups.

##### E. Evangelism

Consider the ability to welcome and interact with strangers as well as offering a witness to Jesus Christ.

##### F. Pastoral Care

Consider the ability to develop trusting relationships, listen empathetically, respond to crisis and grief situations, discern the needs of people and respect confidential information.

##### G. Visionary Leadership

Consider the intern's attitude about the ELCA, ecumenical relationships as well as his/her ability to provide leadership for mission.

##### H. Theological Understanding

Consider the intern's ability to speak clearly and with insight about the Christian faith from a Lutheran perspective.

#### I. Administration

Consider the intern's ability to work with committees, deal with change and conflict, respond constructively to criticism and accomplish tasks in a timely manner.

#### J. Stewardship Leader

Consider the intern's ability to articulate and model Christian stewardship of one's life, talents and money.

#### K. Leadership of Social Ministry

Consider the intern's sensitivity to issues of need and justice in the community, and his/her ability to empower others to respond out of their faith commitment.

### ***Section 2 Questions:***

#### **Assessment of Personal Characteristics Needed for Pastoral Ministry**

##### A. Call to ministry

How would you describe the intern's sense of "call to ministry?"

##### B. Goals

How effective has the intern been in accomplishing his/her learning/service goals?

##### C. Preparedness

How prepared do you think the intern is for the realistic demands of ministry?

##### D. Key Relationships

- Describe the nature and quality of the intern's relationship with the internship committee.
- Describe the nature and quality of the intern's relationship with the pastor/supervisor.
- Describe the nature and quality of the intern's relationship with the staff.

##### E. Congregation's experience

How would you describe the intern's general temperament/disposition as has been experienced in the congregation (e.g. angry, nervous, confident, casual, careless, serious, joyful, flexible, controlling, adaptive, etc.)?

#### F. Receiving feedback

How would you describe the intern's ability for self-awareness and response to feedback?

#### G. Work habits

How would you describe the intern's work habits?

#### H. Strengths

Please describe the intern's greatest strengths for ministry.

#### I. Growth areas

Please identify areas which need further growth. What new insights, knowledge or skills does the intern need to become more fully competent for pastoral ministry?

#### J. Further development

**(Mid-year)** What, specifically, should the intern be working on for the balance of this internship?

**(Final)** What, specifically, should the intern be working on in the coming year?

### ***Final Recommendation***

**The Final evaluation** form also has one additional part, that of the final recommendation and paragraph. That paragraph must be **restricted to a very brief account** of the intern's qualifications, and you will be challenged to be as brief as possible because the form will not allow you to type in more than **500 characters (including punctuation marks and spaces)**. However, it will be the task of all committee members to contribute their ideas to that final paragraph. Remember that the form should reflect the observations of the entire committee, and not just of the committee chair.

#### **Recommendation to the seminary (choose one):**

- Unconditional recommendation for pastoral ministry in the ELCA.
- Conditional recommendation for pastoral ministry in the ELCA.
- Not recommended for pastoral ministry in the ELCA.

#### **Summary Paragraph**

**(500 character limit, including punctuation marks and spaces)**