

Ministry Education in Context



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Making Friends on Internship by DanaLee Ommen, Luther Seminary MDiv Senior

Most of you have been in your internship sites for a couple months now (some for more and some for less). Hopefully it's been a good time of settling in and getting your bearings in a new place - maybe in a whole new state and certainly in a new congregation. Now that you've found the grocery store, the closest movie theatre and the communion supplies, maybe you're on the lookout for one more necessity - new friends. All of us need the support of people around us. Some of you will find it in your families. Some of you have stayed in a familiar space and will continue to hone the relationships you have in that place. And some of you have moved to a whole new area where you don't know a soul and will have to make friends from scratch. No matter what your situation, I bet you're open to developing new friendships. It's rare, after all, to hear one say, "I just have too many friends." So, aside from standing on a busy street corner in your town holding a sign that says, "I'M NEW!!!", how does this happen?

There are various ways to go about making friends in a community. Finding people who are like you is sometimes as simple as joining a club that centers on one of your passions. If you like to bike or run or keep in shape in other ways, you could join a cycling or running club or even the local YMCA or gym. Check community newspapers for various adult sports leagues that happen in your city and join a volleyball, soccer or ultimate frisbee league. Book clubs abound, so if you like to read and discuss what you read, check out your local book store or library for groups that already meet. Writing groups are also often formed through these places. This may be less so in smaller towns, but there is most likely a group for just about any activity you like to do - sewing, quilting, creative memories, rock climbing, eating out, woodworking, etc. If there isn't a group meeting in your area, think about starting one. If you're interested, chances are others will be. Volunteering is another cool way to meet people. Now that all your time isn't filled with studying, find your way to your local food bank, environmental center or after-school program. Using the friends you already have to make new ones is another avenue. Maybe you don't know anyone in the area, but one of your current friends does. Network! And have them introduce you to someone they know via e-mail or by giving you that person's phone number. Finally, making friends in your congregation is an option.

Not everyone would agree and you'll have to decide what you are comfortable with personally, but my advice is to go ahead and allow friendships to happen from within your congregation. It is where you will spend a majority of your time, so it makes sense that friendship would come out of it. Just watch your boundaries! For example, it's probably not a good idea to complain about a church staff issue with a friend who is a member of the congregation. If you need to vent about work, do that with another friend or trusted person outside of your church situation.

The whole summer before my internship (I was one of those who went to a place where I {thought I} did not know a soul), I prayed for one good friend to emerge during the year. The first month, I ran into an old friend from college who lived 30 minutes from



DanaLee Ommen

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me and we reconnected quickly and became each other's confidantes. During the year, a young adult small group emerged in my church that provided a Bible Study group and friendships as well. God answered my prayer tenfold in ways beyond what I could even imagine to ask! May God provide you, also, with the friendships and support you need to enrich and deepen your internship experience.

Peace,
DanaLee Ommen

Making Friends on Internship

By Matthew Manz, Luther Seminary MDiv Intern



Matthew Manz
Larimore, ND

Making friends in the congregations where I serve as an Intern Pastor is a slow process. My wife, Anne, and I have a six-month old baby, Leah, and we are living in Larimore, ND. I am interning with Turtle River Ministry here, a new cooperative of five churches in this rural area. So far, it's been a great experience. When I think about making friends within the congregations, I realize that I tread cautiously in this area of my life.

Since I am married, I am not rushed to find people who are my confidants outside of my wife. I keep in email contact with my close friends whom I've known a long time, and that's been one of my lifelines since starting internship. Besides that, I'm allowing time to take its course and slowly discovering those members of the congregations with whom I wish to be stronger friends. I'm not afraid to make good friends in the congregations. In fact, from previous work as a Youth Director in other congregations, I've found some of my best friends over the years continue to be members from those churches. So I'm excited about the possibilities that exist in this area of my life.

I find that I tend to have a lot in common with other people who are married and have kids. I have an automatic "in" with them. However, I don't necessarily feel the drive to become strong friends with some of them because they (and I) are so busy, it's almost as if they don't need any more friends. I have found older people have more time to be friendly, and there's an eighty-eight year-old gentleman who takes me golfing. I consider him a good friend. I also have an interest in old cars, and have found many collectors in this area with which to make connections. I've found that shared common interests like that (outside of normal "churchy" stuff) tend to lead to deeper conversations on many levels. Also, I have found that I am open to becoming friends with a wider demographic group of people than I would have been before becoming an Intern. I feel this is the work of the Holy Spirit, expanding my horizons.

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For my wife, it's been difficult for her to meet and develop friendships in the time we've been here. She doesn't have a specific reason to go visiting people like I do, but people are very welcoming of her when she comes with me. She is handling very well being a "Pastor's Wife," and attends quilting groups and other social events that allow her to meet other women of the congregation on a one-to-one level. I say she meets mostly women because I have found in this rural area that many adult events are strictly male or female, such as church dinners, bazaars, etc. In fact, I very rarely see men in the kitchens of these churches, unless the event they're attending is being run by men, such as an upcoming Fish Fry.

So far, I can tell that I'm making life-long friends from this experience as an Intern.

Submitting Internship Forms

Many of you have returned the Internship Agreement Form. This helps the Contextual Leadership Initiative office to see the financial picture for the intern, obtain necessary mailing addresses and e-mail addresses, and see that you are getting some scheduled time off. The Learning Service Agreement (LSA) Form and Internship Project Proposal are submitted next. The LSA can be a helpful tool in giving shape to the excitement and attending to the anxiety with which internship can begin. An LSA can provide structure and accountability; it can also provide protection against unlimited demands or possibilities. The LSA is simply a way of indicating in the midst of congregational needs and an intern's preferences and interests how the internship will unfold. Always negotiable and subject to change, an LSA gives direction and content to what will characterize the internship year. The Internship Project is an opportunity for the intern to initiate and organize a program new to the life of a congregation or agency in response to a need within the congregation or agency. All three forms can be downloaded from the following website: http://www.plts.luthersem.edu/cli/internship/intern_forms.asp. When completed, all files can be sent to Laure Schwartz via e-mail at cli@plts.luthersem.edu.

NEW LAY INTERN COMMITTEE WEB SITE:

www.plts.luthersem.edu/cli/internship/lay_committee.asp

To strengthen our communication with the Lay Intern Committee, we have a new web site that provides guidance for the committee as well as a downloadable handbook. We will add a new feature to this site next month which will ask for information about your committee members—i.e. name and e-mail address. Look for this form and encourage your committee members to complete and submit it back to the Contextual Leadership Initiative office electronically. Having committee members' e-mail addresses will allow us to send them the newsletter and any other applicable information.

Loan Deferments

Loan deferments and enrollment verifications are processed at your Seminary. If you are receiving any notifications for payment from your loan institution, please be in touch with your Registrar's Office. Interns are considered enrolled students while on internship.

November Issue Topics

- Taking Risks While on Internship
- Faith-based Community Organizing

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