

Ministry Education in Context



The Newsletter of the Contextual Leadership Initiative of the Western Mission Cluster
April 2004
Volume 1, Issue 7

“Managing Moments in Busy Parish Life” by Judith Morgado, PLTS Intern serving at Grace Lutheran Church in Lincoln, CA.

Off my bedroom is perched a deck. Surrounded by trees, it offers a bird’s eye view of a meadow. This sounds idyllic, but in actuality, the deck has been visited more frequently by spiders than by humans. Practically speaking, a bedroom deck signifies wasted living space. It doesn’t *do* anything. It’s not a closet or a sitting room or a study. Mine can’t even boast of a hot tub.

What keeps my family and I from enclosing the deck is our simple hunger for *moments*. Moments to watch the sunset. Moments to be amused by the grey squirrel in the ponderosa pine. Moments to feel the afternoon breeze. Moments of retreat. Moments of silence. In its simplicity, the bedroom deck is our reminder to rest in the present, sacred moment. The deck invites us to pray.

How I need physical reminders to pray! Internship offers little to no time for retreat, silence, or rest. My site is a mission church with a newly laid as well as developing infrastructure. The day is divided not into hours, but assignments whereby files are constructed, programs initiated, and foundations set for continuing ministry. So much to do and so little time. No need to scold: self-care has, at times, been abandoned.

But not the sacred moments. These have been ardently protected as spiritual resting spots - the walks to the post office, the monthly conversations with my spiritual advisor, the praying of the Daily Office. Quiet moments in the sanctuary have fed me, as well as the waiting time as tea has steeped, the moments engaged in recycling the trash. Prosaic tasks are rich in silence, rest and prayer. From my

view on the deck, sacred moments don’t arrive when self-care is under good regulation, but rather unfold in an unscheduled way in the present moment. Now in Advent. Now in Lent. Now in Easter. Now our Lord comes, blessedly for me, when I am most hurried. Hear the call that comes in silence. Be awake and listen.

Holy moments come for busy interns. Holy moments come in the sacred story. *But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.* (John 20.11-14)

Mary’s view is from the deck: she lingers in a holy place, waiting in the moment for Jesus. And he comes to her and calls her by name. As to Mary, so to Vicar. As to Vicar, so to the world.



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“Boundary Setting in Busy Parish Life” by Al Moen, Pastor at Good Shepherd in Plover, WI

My dad worked 9 to 5, Monday through Friday in a white collar job for decades. My father-in-law was a grain elevator manager for farmers and worked long hours during different seasons. My mom was a stay at home mom during my school years but gradually began a youth museum. It started with a few display cabinets in a library and turned into a wing of the Baylor University Museum. My mother-in-law was a stay at home mom also and helped hold her family together through some of the toughest of times. In every new situation she was more than there for her kids and their kids – she was the neutral zone, the safe spot, a place where security ruled, not tempers.

Why start with that introduction when dealing with a topic about time management and flexible schedules? Because they become examples that I’ll use by which to judge myself when looking at how I’m dealing with my calling and my family. My dad had that 9 to 5 job, but was very involved in our church. Meetings at night were par for the course. Mom brought a lot of work home to get the Youth Cultural Center going. My father-in-law had long hours into the nights depending on the season—away from family. This is a reality true of blue and white collar workers. My mother-in-law who was the neutral zone for so many others needed a neutral zone for her peace of mind and that place was her church.

How do you deal with the ability to have a flexible schedule and a calling that could easily take up every hour of your day and night? You need to set boundaries. The first boundary to set in place is to throw out the idea that all other people have 40 hour-a-week jobs and do not bring their work home with them. Many white and blue collar workers are putting in extra time at the office or at home to make things work. And many in our congregations who might not be putting in extra time at work are putting in extra time in volunteering at church or for a community related project. To think that I am the only one putting in extra hours on my job would be unfair to the others I shepherd. But, that said, we are not going to be able to foster an atmosphere of grace, peace, and inspiration at a worship service if we are totally stressed with God and family.

So, boundary number two for me is one that helps me prioritize. The first list is what must be done for me to feel I am meeting ministry needs in a professional way. The other list is what I need to do to maintain a meaningful relationship with my family. The list regarding ministry looks something like this:

- Meaningful sermons that are done by Thursday;
- Confirmation classes that are meaningful, organized, and safe (a no put down zone);
- Shut-in visits and hospital visits maintained;
- Attend the meetings I am involved in;
- Help maintain two healthy youth groups;
- Funerals get priority if I’m not on vacation;
- Weddings get scheduled unless the family already has the date.

Some of these overlap with the family list. The family list looks something like this:

- Friday is my day off (because the sermon was done on Thursday). If Saturday doesn’t have something scheduled, I don’t go in to the office;
- I need to put my stuff on the family calendar like everyone else does;
- If my kids have something going on during the day my schedule easily flexes to take it in;
- I am involved with my sons’ involvement in the church youth groups and I might be using my leadership skills to help other groups my kids join;
- My wife only gets involved in what she wants to get involved in at church;
- I use all my vacation time and I use it to be with my family.

These are things I hope to mentor to my interns. It can be different for everyone, but the boundary list, whatever your list is, enables you to know when to say no or yes. There will be times when the list loses but over all it is a guide that is helpful in not getting totally lost in the congregation or becoming totally lost in family. It is a balancing act as it is for every family out there, clergy or non-clergy. We learn from one another.

From the CLI Office

Internship Timeline

We are waiting on a few project proposals from interns. These were due at the end of the 2nd month of your internship. Please submit this if you have not already done so. Most mid-year evaluations should be completed and turned in by now, depending on your start date. These were due at the end of the 6th month.

Final Evaluations

These should be completed before the intern leaves the site. Upon completion of your internship, one set of final evaluations (supervisor, intern, and committee) should be sent to your synodical candidacy committee as well as to our office. Remember to keep a copy for your records.

Final Project Report

This is also due in the last month of your internship, along with the final evaluations. The project report should not be more than ten typed pages (double spaced) in length. It should summarize the project itself as well as reflect what the intern has learned from it.



Lee Ann Machosky sent this picture in as an example of what Montana interns do in their spare time (She's holding the calf so it can be branded.)!! Lee Ann is the intern at Prairie Lutheran Parish in Glasgow, MT, where she serves with Pastor Martin Mock.

Happy Spring from the Contextual Leadership Initiative faculty and staff...

Alicia Vargas

Rod Maeker

Randy Nelson

Mary Beth Weaver

Laure Schwartz

Troy Stack-Nelson

Dennis Everson

DanaLee Ommen

Julé Ballinger

May Issue Topics

- Ecumenism during internship