

# Ministry Education in Context

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The Newsletter of the Contextual Leadership Initiative of the Western Mission Cluster  
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## Staff Changes and Saying “Thank You”

Staff changes are happening for the Contextual Leadership Initiative. Rev. Troy Stack-Nelson, Director of the Twin Cities Strategy for Luther, will be leaving August 25<sup>th</sup> and moving to Princeton, NJ. Dennis Everson, Associate Director of Contextual Education at Luther retired June 30<sup>th</sup>. Our newest member Kate Sterner has joined the staff in the Luther office on a part-time basis.

The Contextual Leadership Initiative Office is profoundly grateful to Professor Rev. Dennis Everson for his 26 years of ministry at Luther Seminary. Denny was Pastor to many interns and intern supervisors during this time. He traveled many miles, through all types of weather to visit interns, pastors, and congregational members. Denny also was faculty advisor to many students and took that job very seriously. Denny and Joanne, his wife, took students to Tanzania and Ethiopia on Cross Cultural Mission Experiences and his latest trip this spring took him to Russia to teach as part of his commitment to the global church. We will miss his sense of adventure, his commitment to students, and yes, his sense of humor. Well, some may not miss that. Denny can be contacted by writing to him in care of the CLI office at Luther. We will then send it on to his new address.

We also say thank you to Rev. Troy Stack-Nelson who directed a program called the Twin Cities Strategy, later renamed the Contextual Leadership Program at Luther Seminary, created from work associated with a Lilly Grant. Troy knows some of you out on internship now as he was a leader in your involvement in this program when it first began. Troy was instrumental in getting this program up and running. He enjoyed working with student congregational placements, working on the curriculum, and building relationships with area pastors. We will miss his joy in working hard and his commitment to the ministry. If you worked with Troy and would like to write him a note, feel free to e-mail him at [tstackne@luthersem.edu](mailto:tstackne@luthersem.edu).

Finally, both welcome and thank you to Kate Sterner who is providing her technological expertise in program development. We are grateful for the way she has already assisted in making us work more efficiently in our office. You will see changes to our web pages, processes, and forms that will make your communication and interaction with the various dimensions of the CLI easier. Kate is part time and she started June 1<sup>st</sup>!

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### Student Workers

Contextual Leadership Initiative student workers Julé Ballinger (PLTS) and DanaLee Ommen (Luther) have both graduated. We will miss both of them. Mary Beth Weaver, student worker, will return to the PLTS office this fall and for the summer, Melissa Afdahl is assisting. The PLTS office is hosting summer hours Tuesday and Thursdays, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Becky Piper, student worker, will return from internship and work in the CLI office at Luther starting Fall Semester. We are grateful for having very competent student workers who make a real difference in both of our offices. Our thanks to each of these people committed to the work we do.

### New Deployed Staff

July 1 makes the official beginning of year two of the Contextual Leadership Initiative of the Western Mission Cluster. The first year was a transitional year in several respects, not the least of which involved changes in personnel. In addition to those noted above, we are pleased to introduce the newest member of our staff, Ms. Margy Schmitt Ajer. Margy is a rostered diaconal minister who serves in the Division for Ministry of the ELCA as a deployed person in Region 2. She will formally begin her work with the CLI also as a deployed person on a part-time basis Sept 1.

The intention of the CLI is to complement its full-time personnel – Alicia Vargas, Rod Maeker, Laure Schwartz, and Randy Nelson—with three part-time deployed persons, one each in Regions 1, 2, and 3. Margy will be the deployed person in Region 2. The search is now underway for a deployed person in Region 1 with the appointment to be made by the end of 2004 if at all possible.

Margy will be based in La Mesa, California. Her ministry experience includes involvement in congregations, in youth ministry, and in administration. She has also been deeply involved in the development of leadership for the church, especially through the Candidacy process in Region 2. She brings to our work great contextual familiarity with the Pacific Southwest and strong relationships with students, lay persons, pastors, and synod personnel that have been forged out of a deep commitment to the church. We welcome Margy.

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### **Final Evaluations**

- You can access the internship final evaluations from the following web site:  
[http://plts.luthersem.edu/cli/internship/eval\\_forms.asp](http://plts.luthersem.edu/cli/internship/eval_forms.asp)
- You will need to use Formatta to read these documents. You can download Formatta from the web site.
- Please remember to send copies to your Seminary's Contextual Education Office and your Candidacy Committee. Submit the final evaluations by September 7th.
- CPE final reports should also be sent to your Candidacy Committee in preparation for the final approval process.

## **Supervisory Best Practices**

### **From Spring 2004 Team Building Workshops**

One of the dimensions of the Team Building workshops conducted by the CLI at both Luther and PLTS this past spring was to invite intern supervisors to identify and share what they thought were important supervisory values and practices. A wide range of activities were mentioned without any effort to achieve consensus. What follows then is a list of “best practices” and the invitation to let us know of others that may come to mind from your reflection on those identified.



#### Beginnings and Endings

- Set the stage for the internship through newsletter articles indicating the roles of the internship committee and the congregation in the internship.
- Consider the intern’s entry into the congregation: have the intern introduce himself/herself before arrival through an article in the newsletter, add into a worship service a ritual of welcoming, have an informal “coffee hour” after/before a worship service to welcome the intern.
- Encourage congregational hospitality.
- Choose the members of the internship committee ahead of time with intern possibly adding 1 or 2 after he/she arrives.
- Introduce the committee to helpful ways of giving feedback on sermons but make sure the committee sees its role as more than sermon critique.
- Collect articles/writings for use together as part of the reflective process.
- Make sure there is opportunity for closure including some public occasion to say thank you and goodbye.

#### First Things First

- Tend to the establishment of trust and building a relationship as a first order of business.
- Recognize the importance of first 2 – 3 weeks.
- Identify the year as more about development than evaluation.
- Remind intern that they are seeing one way, but only one way, of doing ministry.
- Tend to practical realities: shopping, maps, transportation patterns, etc. early as a way of dealing with initial anxieties.
- Invite intern to become familiar with context of the community through whatever means are appropriate.
- Encourage intern to meet with all intern committee members and council members during 1<sup>st</sup> month.
- Keep in mind that the intern-supervisor relationship is a professional relationship first. The extent to which a personal relationship of substance develops cannot be predicted.

#### Goals/Principles/Guidelines for Involvement

- Attend a Global Mission Event.
- Attend pericope study groups: Lutheran and ecumenical.
- Involve intern in congregational life without eliminating lay leadership thus expanding the understanding of what a

leader is.

- Encourage learning from previous intern and other professional staff members.
- Arrange for a lot of “shadowing” in the first month but give freedom at the same time.
- Identify with the congregation: it is “we”, not I or them or you.



#### Supervisor-intern Relationship—General suggestions

- Debrief important events/meetings the day after or as close to the event as possible.
- Talk when issues surface.
- Take advantage of time spent traveling to meetings, etc. for reflection.
- Affirm strengths (what is working) as well as areas of need.
- Establish a policy of no surprises and identify any “non-negotiables” that need to be respected.
- Establish the ground rule that no genuine question is inappropriate.
- Look for patterns in behavior that develop which can become the basis for theological reflection.
- Encourage self-awareness, honesty with self, and efforts to keep “head and heart” together.
- Encourage flexibility.
- Emphasize both teaching and learning roles for both intern and supervisor.
- Encourage intern to understand internship as a time for shifting self-understanding from student to one who is a pastor (although also a student).
- Affirm spiritual growth/development as an important goal for internship.

#### Supervisor – intern Relationship—Reflection times

- One-on-One Time – as much as 4 hours a week
  - Have some times of sharing away from the church.
  - Ask and encourage questions.
  - Ask what intern is excited about, confident about, unsure of, afraid of.
  - Include the following topics:
    - The crafting, delivery and assessment of sermons.
    - Triangulation: how it happens, how to avoid it, what to do about it.
    - Appropriateness and limits of vulnerability as an aspect of pastoral leadership.
    - The pluses and minuses of a relationship of limited duration (e.g. one year).
    - Limits of confidentiality with parishioners.
    - The theology that informs the ministry that is being done.

Incorporate the following elements:

- Read books together.
- Study texts together.
- Commit to clear time boundaries and commitment to keep to them.
- Action-reflection model.
- Use critical incidents—what happened, emotional context, evaluation, what bothered you, what were your accomplishments, identify power issues.
- Maintain an open-door policy.
- Have intern identify themes/agenda in writing the day before supervisory meeting.

### Supervisory Values

- Model professional boundaries – including self-care, etc.
- Give intern special responsibilities at some point during internship year – Advent, Lent.
- Contact seminary with respect to any concerns that develop.
- Maintain good communication.
- Recognize concerns needing attention – depression, absences or chronic tardiness, inability/unwillingness to identify with the congregation.
- Qualities to be cultivated: availability/time, trust, respect, open communication, honesty, risk-taking, I Cor. 13, grace not grade, clarity, generosity, joint teaching and learning, safe not manipulative environment, climate conducive to speech, Gal 5 – fruits of the Spirit, sense of humor, focus on process, integrity, courage to fail/succeed, confidentiality, vulnerability, running dialogue.

### Practices related to worship and preaching

- Schedule some concentrated preaching time including several weeks in a row.
- Invite intern to preach the third or fourth Sunday after arrival (after intern has had the opportunity to experience worship first from the pew, then as having some responsibility with the liturgy).
- Intern should participate in choosing the hymns for worship services in which he/she preaches.
- Opportunity to gain experience in writing prayers should be given.
- Intern should have the opportunity to preach on some festivals and for special services.
- Participation in weddings and funerals is important, as possible.
- Interns should be encouraged to read through the liturgy ahead of time—if it is printed in the bulletin, proof read what is printed ahead of time.

### Practices related to Evaluation

- Distinguish between explanation and evaluation.
- Engage in intentional planning of activities and process what has occurred.
- With respect to feedback on sermons – invite a variety of people to comment.
  - Ask for the intern's self evaluation.
  - Invite reflection on how the sermon could have been better.
  - Tend to the various dimensions of a sermon – language, style, delivery, content.
- Use the LSA as a reference point and to plan ahead.