

Guidebook

LOCAL PASTOR MENTOR



www.vaumc.org/dcomresources

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Local Pastor Mentor

“Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study, trained to provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and provisional members pursuing ordained ministry. Local pastors will be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. (*The Book of Discipline*, paragraph 349.1b).

Purpose

Local Pastors are in a mentoring relationship during the years spent in Course of Study. The Local Pastor mentor helps create a safe place for reflection and growth during these first years under appointment.

The mentoring process is grounded in the assumption of a supportive relationship. At times, the relationship will include moments of encouragement, comfort, and affirmation. At other times, it will be moments of challenge, accountability, and raising the hard questions.

It is essential that we are clear that mentoring is not evaluative or supervisory. Those responsibilities reside elsewhere. The mentoring relationship is to involve trust, honesty, and agreement.

Local Pastors are assigned to a Mentor by the dCOM's Mentor Coordinator in consultation with the DS.

Qualities of a Mentor

Spiritually mature, demonstrating a deep and continuing commitment to God and growing in grace and love.

Demonstrates a strong understanding of call and commitment to Jesus Christ and to Christian ministry as lived through the church's ministry.

Appreciates the varieties of lay, licensed and ordained ministry.

Engages in spiritual practices.

Engages in personal vocational development.

Self-aware, respectful, and respected.

Encourages others to be comfortable and discuss in depth the many facets of vocational and personal development.

Able to be open and flexible in adapting to candidates' needs when possible.

Interest in candidates and mentoring.

Maintains family relationships and personal lives that are congruent with the standards expected of clergy.

Possesses excitement and joy for Jesus, the church, and the candidate's ministry.

Local Pastor mentors are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and local pastors who have completed Course of Study.

Responsibilities



Pray for local pastors.

Meet to establish a covenant and schedule for regular and ongoing meetings.

Establish and maintain confidentiality.

Make at least one onsite visit to the workplace of the local pastor each year to enhance reflection on ministry practices. Do not meet with the S/PPRC or the DS as part of the visit.

Help the person/group to focus on issues of role, authority, and office, and to reflect theologically on their practice of ministry.

Be familiar with Course of Study and Extension School for local pastors and the educational materials used.

Discuss Course of Study work with the clergy and consult on matters of pastoral responsibility.

Be available to discuss Course of Study assignments.

Write Annual Local Pastor Mentor Report.



Course of Study

A local pastor should begin Course of Study within the first year of their first appointment.

The Course of Study is a basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry. It is provided for licensed local pastors who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program should have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor (Licensing School) and have been approved for license by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Curriculum & Schools of Study:

The Course of Study is offered at regional Course of Study Schools on the campuses of eight United Methodist theological seminaries. Most courses are offered in a two-week module that allows both full-time and part-time local pastors only. The extension centers usually offer courses in a two- or three-weekend format, which allows bi-vocational local pastors to participate without taking extensive time away from their work or families. Online Course of Study is now approved by the General Conference.

Students in the Course of Study are expected to take no more than four courses per conference year. This is to allow students to prepare adequately for classes at a Course of Study school and to have time to integrate their learning with the consultation of a clergy mentor. Students are discouraged from moving through the Course of Study at a pace too fast to allow for adequate preparation or integration of learning.

Local pastors who complete the requirements of the Course of Study may continue their preparation for conference membership and ordination as an elder through an Advanced Course of Study program. The Discipline requires that local pastors who seek ordination through advanced studies must:



- Complete a bachelor's degree from a college or university recognized the University Senate, or in some instance, for missional purposes, a minimum of 60 semester hours of Bachelor of Arts credit (see ¶324.3 for complete information).

- Complete the five-year Course of Study.
- Complete an Advanced Course of Study, consisting of 32 semester hours of graduate theological study (at a seminary recognized by the University Senate) or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry that shall include United Methodist history, doctrine and policy (¶324.6).

A candidate may request that work completed at a recognized school of theology be evaluated by the Division of Ordained Ministry for transfer to the Course of Study curriculum. The request for this evaluation should come from the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and grade reports or transcripts must be supplied. No credit is recognized in the Course of Study work completed on the undergraduate level unless the Board of Ordained Ministry requests that an exception be made. However, some graduate studies in counseling, business and education may be applied to Course of Study as well as a basic unit of clinical pastoral education.

The Division of Ordained Ministry policy allows up to three courses from a regionally accredited graduate program to be applied to the Advanced Course of Study. Graduate transcripts must be sent to the Division of Ordained Ministry for evaluation before such credit may be granted.

Seminary courses in United Methodist doctrine, polity and history must be included in the 32 semester hours of graduate theological study required for conference membership and ordination as an elder. These courses may be taken at approved school of theology or through the independent study program of the Division of Ordained Ministry.

LOCAL PASTOR

A local pastor is approved annually by the dCOM and licensed by the Bishop to perform the duties of a pastor (§340), including the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The authority is granted for one year at a time under the appointment of the Bishop and Cabinet and under the supervision of a clergy mentor. All local pastors must have been certified as candidates and have completed the studies for license as a local pastor (Licensing School) before they are eligible for appointment.

Full-Time Local Pastors (§318.1)

1. Devote their entire time to the charge to which they are appointed.
2. Shall complete four courses per year, unless they have completed the Course of Study.
3. Shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within eight years (§319.3).
4. Are involved in continuing education after they have completed the Course of Study.
5. Are subject to annual conference review by their dCOM, the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry (§319.2).
6. Are clergy members of the annual conference while under appointment (§316.6).

Part-Time Local Pastors (§318.2)

1. Do not devote their entire time to the charge to which they are appointed.
2. Shall complete two courses per year in the Course of Study until they have completed the curriculum.
3. Shall complete the Course of Study curriculum in twelve years (§319.3).
4. Are subject to annual conference review by their dCOM, the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry (§316.4-6).
5. Are clergy members of the annual conference while under appointment (§316.6).

Students (§318.3)

1. Are enrolled as pre-theological or theological students in a college, university or school of theology listed by the University Senate.
2. Make appropriate progress in their educational program as determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
3. Are subject to annual conference review by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
4. May be appointed as part-time or full-time pastors.

Content of Meetings

The meetings should reflect a combination of lifelong learning, reflections on current ministry and life events, vocational discernment, and accountability for Course of Study. We recommend reading a book for group discussion throughout the year in each of these four areas: theology, practice of ministry, leadership, and personal growth. Books should be selected based on the needs of the mentee or the mentor group.

Theology Recommendations

- *Knowing Who We Are* by Lacey Warner
- *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* by Albert Outler
- *Living our Beliefs* by Ken Carder
- *The Holy Spirit* by Stanley Hauerwas & Will Willimon
- *Reclaiming Our Wesleyan Tradition* by Douglas Strong, etc.
- *Wesley and the Quadrilateral* by Ted Campbell, etc.

Practice of Ministry Recommendations

- *Transforming Evangelism* by Henry Knight & Douglas Powe
- *Shift 2.0* by Phil Maynard
- *Discipleship in the New Expedition* by Phil Maynard
- *Overflow* by Lovett Weems & Tom Berlin
- *The Small Church Advantage* by Teresa Stewart
- *Expanding the Expedition through Community Connection* by Dan Pezet

Leadership Recommendations

- *Grace to Lead* by Ken Carter & Lacey Warner
- *Dare to Shift* by Michael Bowie & Stephen Handy
- *Launching Leaders* by Kay Kotan & Phil Schroeder
- *Humble Leadership* by Graham Standish
- *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger
- *Ultimately Responsible* by Sue Nilsen Kibbey

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Personal Growth Recommendations

- *Didn't See It Coming* by Carey Nieuwhof
- *Be Bold* by Rachel Billups
- *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer
- *Following Jesus* by Henri Nouwen
- *Learning to Be* by Juanita Campbell Rasmus
- *Soul Feast* by Marjorie Thompson

Recommended Meeting Format

- Time of prayer and spiritual formation (practice a discipline together)
- Time of personal sharing - successes, difficulties (10-15 minutes)
- Focused time of reflection on pre-determined monthly meeting focus topic (book or other topic)
- Planning for next time together
- Closing prayer

Site Visits

In preparing for site visits, the mentor and mentee must be clear about the purpose of the visit. The visit is not a consultant role but that of a silent observer. The purpose is to:

- experience the physical setting
- to observe the person in a leadership role in his or her setting
- to observe the person leading in a worship setting

It is not appropriate to meet with the S/PPRC Committee or the mentee's supervisor in the ministry setting. The information gathered during site visits should add depth to the issues being discussed in the mentoring relationship.

A site visit should be followed by a time in which the mentor and mentee are able to reflect together on the visit.

Site visits may consist of one of the following, and agreed upon by the mentor and mentee prior to the visit:

- physical on-site tour of the facility and community
- physically attend a worship service and observe the mentee leading/preaching during a worship service
- watch a video of a worship service and mentee preaching during worship

Mentor Reporting

All Local Pastor Mentors are to use the Local Pastor Mentor Report form. The form is to be filled out annually, shared with the local pastor, and the local pastor includes the report in his/her renewal paperwork. It is to be descriptive of the mentoring and discernment journey, not evaluative in nature. If the dCOM established requirements for the local pastor, the mentor report form should provide reflection on how those requirements were met or discussed during the mentoring relationship. The form is to be signed by the local pastor and the mentor. **It is the responsibility of the local pastor to submit the mentor report form to the dCOM.**

This form, and other mentoring resources, can be found online at vaumc.org/dcomresources.

Annual Local Pastor Mentor Report *Virginia Annual Conference*

Instructions: The report is not to be evaluative or supervisory. It should reflect the time spent with the local pastor and sound familiar to the local pastor. There should be no surprises. The local pastor will receive a copy of this report and upload it with their annual licenses renew process. If you any questions, please contact Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley at jasonstanley@vaumc.org.

Name of Clergyperson: _____ District _____

Number of times you have met with the clergyperson over the past year: _____

1. What topics have you addressed in your conversations this year?
2. In your conversations with the local pastor about his or her education, what successes have you celebrated and what concerns have surfaced? Is the local pastor clear about his or her educational obligations and the plan to meet them?
3. What have you talked about in terms of the next vocational goal or desired status for the clergyperson and the timelines to reach those goals?
4. What issues or questions would be beneficial for the clergyperson and the dCOM to explore together?

Signed: _____
(Mentor)

Local Pastor's response: I have read the report of my mentor and authorize its release to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Signed: _____
(Local Pastor, having read the above)

Date: _____

The mentee/mentor relationship is a covenant relationship. Confidentiality and trust are essential to that covenant relationship.

Because of this, the mentor may not share information from the mentor/mentee relationship, share assumptions about the mentee, or any evaluative information before, during or after dCOM interviews.

This relationship also exists with regards to the relationship of the District Superintendent and mentor/mentee relationship.

MENTOR COVENANT

Ten Commitments as a Mentor

I will establish relationships of trust and respect.

I will maintain confidentiality.

I will create a safe space where leadership grows and relationships flourish.

I will listen more than I talk.

I will ask good questions more than I offer answers.

I will make sure there is clarity about roles and expectations.

I will prepare well for each meeting and use time well, modeling and expecting accountability.

I will pray for mentees in a disciplined manner when together and apart.

I will encourage and affirm progress.

I will show up and have availability while always maintaining appropriate boundaries of time and relationship.

Source: *Lewis Center for Church Leadership*



SAMPLE MENTOR-MENTEE COVENANT

John Wesley talked about "formation for holiness of heart and life," growing in one's love of God and love of neighbor and all creation. Growth in faith has to do with all of life. For the purposes of this covenant, the mentor and mentee covenants with each other for the purpose of growing in one's love of God. This will include:

Learning Goals:

- Continue to discern the vocational call to ministry by assessing gifts for ministry and reflecting on affirmation in community.
- Reflect on effectiveness in ministry through specific challenges in the current ministerial context.
- Utilize the relationship as a way of assessing boundaries in ministry and being held accountable to maintaining safe and healthy boundaries.
- Develop consistent life-giving spiritual disciplines and report on whether or not these disciplines are being maintained.
- Other:

Expectations:

- Meeting regularly (at least nine times) during the year. These meetings are not required to be in person but are best when able.
- Remain in covenantal prayer with and for one another beyond the meeting time.
- Included in the monthly sessions will be time spent in practicing a spiritual discipline
- Complete annual reports.
- Come prepared to discuss the topic(s) agreed upon.
- Other:

Mentor Signature

Date

Mentee Signature

Date

updated from the Missouri Annual Conference