**Clergy Mentoring in the VAUMC**

The Mentoring program in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church identifies mentors as those who "shepherd future shepherds." The Mentor Committee, a subcommittee of the Committee on Call and Candidacy, has worked to cultivate resources and materials for mentors that they may be equipped in their roles.

**The Role of Mentors**
The Clergy Mentoring Manual offers the following when describing the role and characteristics of a mentor:

> *"Mentoring occurs within a relationship where the mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth. An effective mentor has a mature faith, models effective ministry, and possesses the necessary skill to help individuals discern their call in ministry. Mentoring is a part of the preparation and growth for inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry, local pastors, and provisional members of an annual conference. Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry."*

An overview of the mentoring structure in the VAUMC can be found here.
Expectations for the mentors in their roles can be found here.

**Clergy Mentoring in the United Methodist Church**
Clergy who are within the first three years of receiving their license, and/or have yet to have complete Course of Study or a Master of Divinity program are required to be in a licensed local pastor mentoring group. These groups are led by Ordained Elders and Deacons, and Licensed Local Pastors who have completed the educational requirements. The Clergy Mentoring Manual produced by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry includes the following:

> *Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained, and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:*
>
> *b. 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. Provisional members will be assigned a clergy mentor in full connection by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. A candidacy mentor may continue with the same person if trained to serve as a clergy mentor.*

The full Clergy Mentoring Manual can be found here: https://doc.vaumc.org/MinServices/ClergyMentoringManual.pdf

**Timeline for Mentors**
Clergy Mentors are assigned by the Center for Clergy Excellence in consultation with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) when the candidate has been recommended for licensing, attended licensing school, and is serving in their first appointment. Mentors are **expected to meet monthly** with their mentoring group. Mentors are expected to turn in quarterly reports which share information on attendance, topics discussed, and any noteworthy observations.

**Timeline for Candidates**
Between fulfilling the educational requirements (PL's have 12 years for COS, and FL's have 8 years, and an MDiv can take three to five years), the appointment system, and the potential for candidates to pursue provisional membership - it's important to be flexible with rolling membership in an LLP mentoring group. If you notice that clergy do not respond to prompts for meeting times, it is appropriate to remind them attendance is required to be in compliance with the requirements for maintaining their license.

**Requirements for Mentors Assigned to journey with Candidates during Phase II (Admitted Candidate to Certified Candidate) Only**

**Report Form**
Mentors are expected to fill out a report form quarter to fill out a report form, which is then sent to the dCOM as part of the candidates application for certification. The link to the report form by district can be found here

**Licensed Local Pastor Handbook**
The Licensed Local Pastor Handbook is an excellent resource when reviewing requirements and expectations for new LLP's. Educational requirements- including scholarship information-requirements for license renewal, rights and responsibilities according to the Book of Discipline and much more can be found in the handbook. Please bookmark this page as a resource:

**Site Visits**
In the age of zoom and larger districts, gathering in person is not always possible. The Center for Clergy Excellence and the Board of Ordained Ministry supports LLP Mentoring groups meeting however and whenever possible to keep to the monthly schedule. However, if groups are able to gather at the ministry sites of their members, it creates opportunities for growth and understanding as individuals and as colleagues in ministry.

**Schedule of Topics**
There is not a complete curriculum for Licensed Local Pastor Mentoring Groups. This is intended to give leaders the greatest amount of flexibility in presenting these topics. The Mentor Committee is working on a more robust offering for 2024-2025. In the meantime, this list has been cultivated as a guide for your meetings.

Year 1
Summer 1:  Connecting with Your Community: Starting on the Right Foot
Fall 1:  Wesleyan Theology and Sacraments in Action
Winter 1:  Boundaries in a Leadership Role
Spring 1: Reaching New People

Year 2
Summer 2:  Church Finances and Stewardship
Fall 2:  Disciple-Forming Systems
Winter 2: Preaching
Spring 2: Polity, church structure and leading meetings

Year 3
Summer 3: Developing Lay Leadership
Fall 3: Communicating Vision through Worship and Programs
Winter 3: Conflict Resolution/Handling Difficult People
Spring 3:  Being a Lifelong Learner  (and celebration of the group's time together)

Year 4, 5 and beyond (until educations are complete):
Regionally organized groups meet 2-3 times per year and in-between as needed with mentors.  Individuals follow through on personal mentoring and development goals and gather for self-awakening questions, etc.