

Dear Colleague in Christian Service:

We are so grateful for your willingness to help your Minister in this part of his/her education at Palmer Theological Seminary through the Theological Field Education program.

You are embarking on an important part of your Minister's education. For two years, your Minister will be using the process of consultation with you as those who receive ministry in order that they may grow in their performance of ministry, grow in their pastoral identity and grow in their understanding of their call to ministry.

In your commitment to this task, your Minister will be seeking support from you for the learning goals and ministry tasks/programs they have set for the year. Your support also includes holding your Minister accountable for these goals that have been set. The process of monthly reflection on these ministry and personal goals with your Minister is a valuable discovery of what God is doing and intends to do in your midst.

We are taking the opportunity, as the academic year is about to start, to send you some material about the philosophy of Theological Field Education (TFE) and information and tips about the functioning of the lay committee as the Site Team. We hope these are helpful to you as you approach the mentoring relationship with your Minister. A Pastor/Mentor who is a trusted colleague of your Minister will be sharing in this educational and growing effort with you on behalf of your Minister. Also enclosed is a brief Guide for the Site Team, please forward this document to the Site Team Chairperson.

Should you have questions about mentoring, or the expectations of the student or the department, please be in contact with us on the Wynnewood campus. Our contact information is:

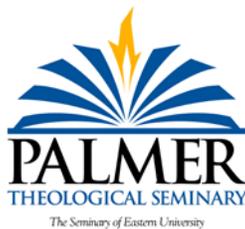
Rev. Beth Congdon-Martin, Director **484-384-2958** or econgdon@eastern.edu;

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Mrs. Lindsey Plant Perry, Coordinator **484-384-2959** or lperry@eastern.edu

Again, we are grateful for your willingness to serve the Church in this educational capacity for our growing and maturing pastors. May you receive many blessings from your efforts.

Yours in Christian service,
Beth Congdon-Martin, Director
Supervised Ministries



A Guide for the Site Team in Theological Field Education Palmer Seminary, Parchment Valley, WV

Welcome

Welcome to Palmer Seminary's Theological Field Education (TFE) program! We are delighted that you have agreed to partner with Palmer Theological Seminary in the educational experience of growing men and women for Christian ministry. It is our desire that your experience and that of the other Site Team members will be one in which you feel the joy of contributing to God's plan of extending God's reign by enhancing leadership in the church. Further, it is our hope that your experience with the TFE program will confirm your own journey of faith and renew your enthusiasm for your leadership role in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Theological Field Education is the place in the seminary curriculum where academic theory is tested and tried. It is the place where students can be challenged to not only teach and preach their theology, but *live* it. It is the place where students can develop their gifts, discern their calling, and have the opportunity to *be* the Body of Christ in the world.

Theological Field Education is an opportunity for student pastors to learn how to collaborate with those they serve in developing the most effective ministries they can in any particular setting. We commend you to the educational task of supporting and giving feedback to your Minister as s/he grows in his/her call to ministry and in his/her ability to perform ministry tasks.

So- welcome to TFE and to Palmer Theological Seminary. May your experience be a blessing and a challenge, to the glory of God.

For your fuller understanding of the expectations of TFE, we ask you to read the following departmental policies. This section includes selected Palmer Theological Seminary's academic policies, including the TFE Code of Ethics.

Purpose

The Site Team offers the pastor a significant opportunity for support and accountability. The relationships formed with this committee provide a most important component to the student pastor's education, and a collegial style of clergy-lay dialogue that will continue to be a foundation for effective ministry in the future.

The Site Team is actively involved in the formation of the Serving/Learning Covenant created between the pastoral intern and the ministry site. During the 6-8 meetings that occur during the year between the Site Team and pastoral intern, the covenant becomes the basis for discussion and assessment. The seminary provides formal assessment tools to help gauge the student pastor's growth and understanding. The site team's insightful and forthright participation in these disciplines is necessary.

As representatives of the congregation or other site, the Site Team provides a channel of communication and education, and network for support and accountability. Members of the Site Team seek to talk "with" rather than "about" the student pastor. From their perspectives as laypersons, participants affirm effective performance in ministry and identify areas requiring improvement. The acceptance and encouragement of the committee offer the student pastor a valuable dimension of support in developing and confirming a sense of professional identity and competence. Engaging in the process of forming covenants and evaluations encourages the student pastor to serve with a relationship of accountability to the church/agency.

Design of Committee

The committee is a small group of approximately 5 persons designed specifically to serve as a site team. The committee will be selected by the student pastor. The student pastor may consult with a key lay leader. Selection of the committee should include diversity of age, gender, background and theology. Members are likely to be most effective that have an interest in nurturing the growth of the student pastor, and have gifts for providing a relationship of direct, non-threatening communication. The student pastor cannot chair the Site Team.

The Site Team chairperson calls the first meeting and facilitates subsequent meetings. No member of the student pastor's family may serve as a member of the committee. This ensures the building of a professional relationship with the committee, unencumbered by a confusion of roles, relationships, and responsibilities.

The Teaching Church Model is essential to the success of effective supervisory training by the Site Team. Your active involvement and guidance in the supervisory process is as essential as the pastoral supervisory component. The student pastor needs to receive from you, as laypersons, helpful feedback in his/her practice of ministry. You will not be able to effectively assess these components in readiness formation unless you are actively involved in his/her learning and practice of ministry. Therefore, please take your role as a very serious and essential part in helping your student pastor in his/her ministry growth.

Developing an Effective Educational Relationship as A Site Team

As lay members of a congregation or other ministry, site team members are appreciated for their individual, unique perspectives on ministry that illuminate new ways for the student pastor to understand the church/agency and to experience oneself in ministry with the laity. Since each setting for ministry, Site Team and seminarian are gifted in individual ways, each relationship with a student pastor has different qualities. Some of the attitudes and functions that site teams and student pastor have commonly found to facilitate a positive relationship for educational growth have included:

- openness and acceptance in the group; including all the members' ideas and feelings
- being in prayer for the student pastor, the committee and the church/agency
- understanding the student pastor and the laity to be in ministry together
- trust and confidentiality
- mutual respect
- sharing the heritage and mission of the church or agency
- discerning and affirming the student pastor's gifts
- offering direct feedback on the student pastor's functioning through viewing student pastor's ministry and experiencing student pastor's presence

- sharing criticism in an atmosphere of acceptance and hope
- believing that the church/agency is strong enough to live with imperfections
- acknowledgment and working toward resolution of conflict
- respect for student pastor's boundaries and need for balance of ministry life and personal life
- resource for facing challenges, but encouraging student pastor's growth rather than solving problems for the student pastor
- following appropriate ethical norms

What are some additional goals and attributes that your Site Team brings to the pastoral internship? By taking the risk of being in relationship with the student pastor and sharing what you perceive and believe, your committee contributes significantly to student pastors establishing an effective relationship with the church/agency or other ministry, and discovering and growing in his/her gifts for ministry. We hope that your investment in participating in the Site Team will also offer you fulfillment and growth.

Scheduled Meetings

Because trust and communication develop best in the absence of serious problems, the Site Team is to meet with the student pastor regularly rather than only during times of difficulty and stress. The suggested schedule is monthly from October to December and from February to April (a total of 6 sessions), with additional meetings scheduled if needed in a context of sensitivity to persons and confidentiality concerning issues. Suggested agenda for meetings with the student pastor is:

- Greetings and opening prayer
- Review of the committee's purpose and the student pastor's covenant
- Review of the student pastor's ministry experience since the previous meeting.
 - Suggestions of questions to be raised are:
 - (a) Are the expectations, commitments, and terms of the covenant being honored?
 - (b) What tasks of ministry are performed effectively by the student pastor?
 - (c) What tasks of ministry require growth and improvement?
 - (d) Do additional areas of service or opportunities for learning by the student pastor need to be considered?
 - (e) How can communication, education, support, and accountability be strengthened?
 - (f) Does the student pastor's spouse (if married) need special attention, consideration, support, or response?
- Summary and closing prayer.

The key concern is that time be allowed for sharing by all committee members and the student pastor. Remember that the ministry growth of the student pastor is the Site Team's major interest. Discussion concerns the learning goals of the intern as stated in the serving learning covenant.

Annual Assessments

The Site Team formally assesses the student pastor twice during the year, once through the Mid-year Reflection on Learning and through an End of the Year Assessment. Assessment may be done with or without the student pastor present, but the completed forms are to be reviewed and discussed with the student pastor. While it is the student pastor's responsibility to submit the forms to the Seminar Leader and to the Supervised Ministries Office, you greatly help the process by completing your work in advance of the due date.

The Assessments are read by Supervised Ministries' faculty and staff and responded to when appropriate. It is treated with maximum confidentiality by the staff and released to others outside of PTS only when written permission is granted, and is destroyed five years after the student pastor's last contact with our department.

Retention of Student Records

The Supervised Ministries office maintains Theological Field Education records for five years following completion of the courses. Judicatories and denominations sometimes ask for information based on a student pastor's Theological Field Education experience. You as the Site Team may want to consider writing a generic reference for your pastoral intern. The generic reference might include observations on the growth of the student pastor serving at your ministry site over the year, his/her strengths, character traits, and what you observe of his/her professional gifts at this point in her/his journey. The generic reference may be given to the pastoral intern to keep in his/her TFE file in Supervised Ministries.

See also site team Assessment Forms which can be downloaded in useable form from our website in the "Site Team Information" section or from the TFE Forms section of our website. www.palmerseminary.edu/current-students/supministries

Thank You

Palmer Theological Seminary is very grateful to the persons serving on Site Teams. The Supervised Ministries Office seeks to serve committees by conferring with Site Team members upon request by phone (484-384-2958/2959) about any matters of concern. Thank you for your essential role in the education of a student in training for ministry.