



Ministry Inquiry Program Supervision Orientation

Based on the March 2016 MIP Review Retreat, it was agreed that in order to strengthen Mennonite Church USA's Ministry Inquiry Program, more intention to orienting and providing support for the supervisors is key. To this end, Mennonite Church USA will provide an orientation session for all supervisors in late spring to review the MIP program, nuts and bolts, expectations, share best practices, as well as give opportunity for supervisors to meet and network. This will happen through video conferencing, which will also be recorded and shared with those supervisors who are unable to attend.

The following is a general flow for the orientation:

1. Review general program information

The Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP) is a denominational program that began around 1989. The 11-week program provides college students with a safe space to explore faith issues and ministry as a vocation under the supervision of a mentoring pastor. **The official purpose statement of the Ministry Inquiry Program is:**

“A leadership program of Mennonite Church USA...The Ministry Inquiry Program provides opportunity for students at Mennonite Church USA colleges to explore pastoral ministry*.”

****“Pastoral” to mean primarily in congregational settings with allowance/flexibility of exploring alternative “pastoral experiences” (e.g. camp, service agencies) as a part of their summer congregational placement experience.***

2. Review of forms previously emailed to pastors

Guidelines for Supervisors Form

- **Overall expectation:** Provide a safe environment for students to explore and ask questions related to faith and ministry.
- **Students should work full-time (around 40-45 hours per week) for approximately 11 weeks.** Over the course of the summer, they should participate in Sunday services and a variety of other pastoral activities. The student is also welcome to participate in outside activities in which the congregation is involved (e.g. volunteering in the church-sponsored community food pantry).

- **Intentional time for reading and reflection should also be a regular part of the student's schedule.** There is not a specific reading list or 500 pages requirement, but a suggested reading list is provided at the end of this document for your convenience. As a gift from the denomination, students will receive *Called To Be A Pastor* by Larry Hauder, and will be encouraged to participate in a virtual study circle hosted by the Denominational Minister of Youth and Young Adults (and Mennonite Church USA MIP administrator) and the author to process their experience in light of this book. Readings will be different for each student based on their particular interests and passions. Pastors are encouraged to create a reading list with their student early during the experience and make suggestions.
- **Provide some initial orientation during the student's first few days at the congregation.** Providing a brief history of the church and reviewing a specific, yet flexible, job description are important parts of the orientation. Review the student's goal sheet during this time, and feel free to offer suggestions and feedback. (More details about the goal sheet are listed below.) Do not forget to orient student to your congregation's pictorial directory, safe sanctuary/child protection policies, and conference leadership.
- **Introduce the student to the congregation** during the first worship service after s/he arrives; briefly explain his/her role as an MIP participant, invite the congregation to see this as a learning experience for them, and offer a blessing on the summer together. Often using a ritual can be meaningful (presenting student with the keys to the church office, or a coffee cup, etc.) as a way of marking this transition).
- **Plan to meet with your student**, formally and informally, at least once per week to help develop your mentoring relationship and allow her/him to ask questions. When they are scheduled for a public aspect of ministry your role is to help assure a positive experience for them and everyone involved.
- **Tailor this experience to the student's interests and passions.** Care was taken during the placement process to ensure that students will be serving in a congregation where they can explore their particular interests; it's fine for them to focus on a few specific areas of interest.
- **Be intentional about ending.** Just as you took care of introducing your student to the congregation at the beginning of the summer, be intentional about the ending and closure. Again, use of blessing, ritual and/or gift can often be very meaningful.

Inquiry Goal Sheet Form

- The goal sheet is an important part of the inquiry process. The purpose is for students to take ownership of their experience and engage in intentional

reflection on the intersection of faith and vocation by **creating four to five goals** around leadership development and/or ministry issues.

- An inquiry experience, where the student explores *her/his* goals in your context, is **slightly different from an internship experience**, where the student achieves *your* goals in your context.
- **The Inquiry Goal Sheet received via email was a sample.** If students have yet to draft their own inquiry goal sheet, work with them to set specific goals for their summer experience the first week of MIP.
- **The goal sheet will be a fluid document.** Some students will arrive at the congregation and realize that a particular goal is unrealistic, or they may desire to add a completely new goal. These changes are perfectly fine for the student to make.
- **Talk about the goal sheet with the student during their first week.** Feel free to offer your own suggestions and feedback. When appropriate, plan the student's work and activities so that they are able to meet their goals.
- **On occasion throughout the summer, allow the goal sheet to serve as a centerpiece of conversation.** Please take time to inquire about your student's progress and help keep her/him accountable. This can be a helpful tool for midterm and/or final reviews.

Memorandum of Agreement Form

- The purpose of this document is to make sure everyone—you, the student and the college administrator **shares the same expectations**.
- **Each supervisor received a sample copy via email;** originals have been signed by the student and his/her college administrator. The original will be sent to you as a PDF attachment. Please sign the Memo, make a copy for yourself, and mail or email back to the college administrator you are working with directly. Emails of all college administrators are listed at the bottom of this form.
- **Start and end dates will be different for each student.** The memorandum can be flexible, and dates can change from those listed on the memo as long as both the student and pastor are in agreement.
- **The host congregation is asked to provide room and board.** In the past, some students have lived with a family from the congregation, and others have lived by themselves in an apartment. As long as both the student and the pastor are satisfied with the housing arrangement, it's fine.
- **The host congregation should also provide the student with a summer stipend of \$500,** which will be paid directly to the student. The stipend may be paid in monthly increments or however it is most convenient based on the church's payroll system.
- **Approximately one month after your student arrives, you will receive a brief evaluation form of the student's work and experience so far.** The purpose of

this evaluation is to check in and alert your college administrator of any potential red flags. You'll receive another evaluation form at the end of the summer. Students will also complete their own evaluations of the experience. We encourage you to review these with one another and for you to complete an exit interview with the student to facilitate intentional reflection.

- **After completion of the summer experience, the student will write a four-page reflection paper and conduct a final reflection interview with their college administrators.** The student will also be asked to submit their reflection paper to their sending and receiving conferences and Mennonite Church USA as a way of sharing their learning with the other stakeholders of the MIP. Some colleges will also have students attend and partake in a celebration dinner and/or a chapel service, allowing participants the opportunity to share about their inquiry program experiences.
- **Following the submission of reflection papers the college gives each student a \$2,000 scholarship,** which is provided through the student's college, the student's home congregation, the sending and receiving Mennonite conferences, and the Mennonite Church USA denomination.
- **Other requirements may be noted by particular colleges/universities.** Your student's college administrator will let your student know of any other additional projects that need to be completed for full credit.

3. What Makes for a Good Mentor/Mentee Relationship?

- **The mentor/mentee relationship is key to the success of the program.** Talking and connecting with you will be important for the student to gain insight and have an intimate look into the structure of the church.
- **Encourage your student to talk, vent, process and celebrate with you.** Ask big questions such as: "What joys/challenges have you experienced so far?" and "What are you learning about yourself?" Give guidance, when appropriate.
- **Spend time practicing a spiritual discipline together and/or prayer.** These can often spark excellent conversations and/or deepen relationships. Allow your student the chance to minister to you! Students should be working on their prayer life during their MIP experience, especially regarding questions that arise related to vocation and faith. They should reserve regular time in their work schedule for prayer and Scripture reading.

4. Reading List (*suggested to get your started*)

Hauder, Larry. *Called to be a Pastor: Why It Matters to Both Congregations and Clergy*. Eugene, OR: WIPF & STOCK, 2015.

Peterson, Eugene H. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

Miller, Keith Graber. *Living Faith: Embracing God's Callings*. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2012.

5. Questions or clarifications over the summer, contact your college administrator:

Bethel College: Peter Goerzen, pgoerzen@bethelks.edu

Bluffton University: Randy Keeler, keelerr@bluffton.edu

Eastern Mennonite University: Carmen Schrock-Hurst,
carmen.schrock-hurst@emu.edu

Goshen College: Bob Yoder, robertey@goshen.edu

Hesston College: Todd Lehman, todd.lehman@hesston.edu

For other concerns, contact the Mennonite Church USA MIP administrator:

Rachel Gerber, rachelg@mennoniteusa.org