

VICAR SUPERVISOR'S HANDBOOK

*WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY
MEQUON, WISCONSIN*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *Vicar Supervisor's Handbook* is to assist supervising pastors in their important task of aiding the seminary in its training program by giving a vicar a year of practical parish experience. The reader will find the seminary's statement of "Purpose, Objectives, and Policies of the Vicarship Program" on page 2 of this booklet.

The handbook takes its outline from the "Report on Vicar Service," which the supervisor will be asked to file with the seminary after the vicar completes his term of service. The final pages of this booklet contain a sample copy of the report.

The three objectives of the vicarship program, in order of priority, are:

1. to aid the seminary in its training program;
2. to give the students practical parish experience;
3. to give assistance to our congregations.

This ordering of priorities has developed over time. The vicarship program progressed from emergency service to churches and schools by student volunteers to required training for all men who have completed the middler year.

In the pastoral theology course and in the interview with the dean of students which precedes assignment, the twin aims of learning and service are stressed. By listening, observing, and doing, the vicar should become acquainted with every phase of the parish ministry.

The prospective vicar is reminded that, although he will be serving in the public ministry, he will not be an assistant pastor; that he will, rather, remain a student who assists the supervising pastor; that the supervising pastor is his seminary instructor during the year of vicarship. In all areas of parish work the vicar is under the direct supervision of the pastor, not the direct supervision of the congregation.

During the school year the supervisor will receive a letter of encouragement from the seminary president. He will also be contacted by the faculty member who is acting as the vicar's advisor.

What follows will provide information and suggestions regarding the various areas of learning and service in which the vicar will be involved. What are the seminary's objectives in this area? What has the vicar been taught up to this point? How might the supervisor be able to help him? What can he be expected to do?

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**PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES
OF THE
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY
VICARSHIP PROGRAM**

Purpose:

The purpose of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Vicarship Program is to aid Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in its ministerial training program by giving its students a year of practical experience in church work under the direction of a qualified supervising pastor. In particular, the purpose of the vicarship year is to assist the seminary in fulfilling the following two of the seminary's six objectives:

- To train its students in the skills required for ministry in the contemporary world, e.g., preaching, teaching, outreach, counseling, worship, administration, equipping the saints, interpersonal skills;
- To instill in its students the kinds of attitudes that will assist them as they carry out their ministry in the contemporary world, e.g.,
 - Confessional in stance
 - Evangelical in approach
 - Mission-minded in spirit
 - Culturally sensitive
 - Appropriately flexible
 - Zealous to nurture and equip the saints.

Objectives:

The objectives of the vicarship program, in order of priority, are:

1. to aid the seminary in its training program;
2. to give the students practical parish experience;
3. to give assistance to our congregations.

Policies:

A. Implementation

1. There are three basic ways for congregations seeking to participate in the program to be selected to receive a vicar.
 - a. Congregations can be selected through the Vicar in Mission Settings (VIMS) program. Significant funding is available to assist congregations that cannot bear the entire cost. Congregations taking this route apply through their district mission boards. Both mission and established congregations can participate. The requests are prioritized by the district mission boards. Final recommendations are made by a special committee composed of representatives from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the Board for Home Missions. Their meeting takes place in early spring.
 - b. Congregations can be selected by applying directly to the seminary, copying their district president. In special circumstances limited funding may be available to assist congregations that cannot bear the entire cost.
 - c. Occasionally, the seminary itself will contact congregations and encourage them to participate in the vicar program.
2. The seminary is active in the process, both in selecting the congregations to receive vicars and in matching the individual vicars with their supervising pastors. The final decisions rest with the COP meeting as the Assignment Committee. The seminary looks for three fundamental criteria to be met in those congregations it recommends to the COP:
 - a. A congregation who has an evangelical supervising pastor willing to spend the time mentoring a vicar. There are many evangelical pastors, but not all have the time or the

inclination to mentor a man who may need considerable nurturing before he can come into his own as a servant of the Word.

- b. A congregation with an active lay leadership (men and women) and a well-rounded ministry. We want men to receive the kind of experiences that will enable them to serve anywhere in North America. We also want them to experience a congregation where pastor and people work in harmony with one another.
 - c. A congregation with a definite plan and a commitment to outreach.
3. The prospective supervising pastor's congregation must agree to regard the year of vicarship as part of the student's theological training under the general supervision of the seminary and the direct supervision of the supervising pastor. While a congregation is still considering the matter, the seminary is willing—at the prospective pastor's request—to work with the congregational leadership in order to help them understand the nature of the vicar program and the benefits of supporting a vicar.
 4. The vicar is not an assistant pastor but a theological student preparing to become a pastor. He receives direction and instruction from the supervising pastor and not from the congregation.
 5. The vicar assignment is for a twelve-month period beginning August 15 of each year. Normally, the vicar will receive two weeks of vacation, that is, two Sundays and either the six days which precede that Sunday or which follow it. It is up to the supervising pastor and vicar to decide if the two weeks are taken together or separately. Any additional vacation time is at the discretion of the supervising pastor. Special circumstances may require absences at other times.

B. Directions to Supervising Pastors

1. While the vicar is to become acquainted with every phase of the parish ministry through observation, to the greatest extent possible he is to become acquainted with every phase of the parish ministry through participation.
2. More specifically, the vicar is to gain experience
 - a. in preaching, generally once a month to begin with. It is possible to increase this as the year progresses. All sermons are prepared under the direction of the supervising pastor;
 - b. in leading worship;
 - c. in teaching, catechism class in particular. It is assumed that he will also gain experience in teaching Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and youth and adult Bible classes;
 - d. in various types of sick calls, though this should not be the major share of his work;
 - e. in calling on unchurched prospects and on those who have visited the worship services;
 - f. in youth work, though preferably not as youth leader;
 - g. in observing and participating in the planning and implementation of a financial stewardship emphasis within the congregation;
 - h. in observing and receiving instruction from the pastor in pastoral leadership skills;
 - i. in receiving instruction in time management from the pastor and in practicing good time management during his vicarship.
3. Since the vicar is still in training for the ministry, he is not to be used in serious disciplinary or counseling cases, but he should have the experience of observing or participating in pre-marriage counseling and in observing or discussing with the pastor one or two counseling cases.
4. Work not directly related to the administration of the means of grace (secretarial and custodial tasks, arranging social functions, running errands, etc.) should be kept at a minimum.

C. Responsibility of the Supervising Pastor

1. It is expected that the supervising pastor will meet regularly, preferably weekly, with his vicar.
2. At the close of the vicar's term the supervising pastor is to submit a report to the president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.
3. If problems arise relating to the attitude and application of the vicar, the supervising pastor is to discuss these with the vicar's advisor at an early date. In case of serious problems, the seminary president will also become involved. If the problem involves matters of conscience regarding the

- doctrine and practice within the congregation, the supervising pastor has the obligation to resolve these concerns, if necessary, with the circuit pastor.
4. Supervising pastors serving for the first time will be contacted by the seminary prior to the vicar's arrival to provide an orientation to the program.
 5. At regular intervals, generally every five years, the supervising pastor is expected to attend seminars conducted by the seminary to provide orientation and training for his supervisory work

D. Financial Arrangements

1. Since the vicar is a full-time student during his year of vicarship, he is not to seek part-time gainful employment.
2. The vicar will receive a monthly stipend as determined by the Conference of Presidents. The vicar will also be provided with health insurance coverage as needed and will receive assistance with housing costs that exceed a level determined by the Conference of Presidents. All these sources of income are treated as subject to withholding for both income tax and social security purposes. W-2 forms will be prepared for all vicars.
3. The vicar is to receive no compensation from the congregation except transportation expenses for one round trip from the vicar's home to the place of vicarship and for travel expenses incurred as part of his training. (Congregations are cautioned against giving vicars additional compensation or regular financial assistance on their own. Not only will this result in an inequality of treatment among vicars, but it may result in tax liability problems for both the congregation and vicar. If there are concerns about the adequacy of compensation a vicar receives, this should be brought to the attention of the synod's Director of Human Resources, who administers this aspect of the vicar program on behalf of the Conference of Presidents.)

PREACHING

Objectives

By the time he completes his middler year, a seminary student has written four sermons as course assignments and has preached these sermons in class and/or in congregations. The objective of the vicar experience is to enable the student to gain the experience that comes with preparing and preaching about 20-25 new sermons. By means of this assignment, the student will grow in his ability to study a text, to analyze a text, and to arrange the truths of a text in a logical outline. He will also grow in his ability to write well-crafted and gospel-filled sermons and preach with joy and enthusiasm. Regular preaching responsibilities also help the student prepare for a time when he will preach regularly in his own congregation.

Training

The outline for homiletical training at the seminary is found in *Preach the Gospel*, a textbook published by Profs. Richard Balge and Joel Gerlach in 1982. It is essential that new supervising pastors read (or reread) this manual before their vicar arrives. We also recommend that experienced supervisors occasionally review the book's procedures.

Juniors prepare two sermons based on texts from the Gospels. Middlers write one sermon based on an Epistle selection and another on an Old Testament narrative text. Each homiletics professor selects texts for his class (usually from the *Christian Worship* lectionary), and students work on their text studies and text analyses together with classmates and with input from their professor. On the basis of this joint effort, each student prepares a basic outline, an expanded outline, and a written sermon. Juniors preach both sermons in class. After Easter during their junior year, the students are encouraged to look for opportunities to preach their two junior class sermons as often as possible in congregations. Middlers preach both of their required sermons in a local congregation with the professor offering feedback after

watching a video of each sermon. We require students to preach in class without a sermon manuscript, although we allow notes containing a short outline and Bible passages. Every facet of the preaching experience is done with assessment by and assistance from the homiletics professor.

Assistance from the Supervisor

Preach the Gospel assumes a classic deductive style of preaching, the style we teach during a student's first two years at the seminary. By adopting this approach we do not intend to negate the value of inductive or narrative sermons or homilies, and students have an opportunity to study these alternate preaching patterns during their senior homiletics course. Supervising pastors who have experience with other preaching styles may want to help their vicars prepare several sermons in an alternate style. We ask, however, that the majority of sermons the vicar preaches—and certainly the sermons he preaches during the first half of the vicar year—be in a deductive style.

We also ask supervising pastors to work with vicars in much the same way as their professors did at the seminary. A careful study of *Preach the Gospel* will help the supervising pastor become familiar with concepts and terms seminarians are used to. As the vicar translates and studies the text (text study and analysis) he may look for guidance with difficult theological concepts or suggestions for illustrations and applications. He will want feedback as he strives to discover the goal of the text (telic note) and the sin or problem (malady) the goal seeks to cure. He is used to his homiletics professor looking for specific law and gospel already in this stage of sermon work and will assume his pastor will do the same. He will want the pastor's reaction as he works toward dividing the text and preparing a basic outline. He will expect the pastor to make thoughtful suggestions on expanded outlines and written sermons and will certainly desire assessment and evaluation after the sermon is preached in worship. Supervisors of more gifted vicars may find it possible to stand back a little as the year progresses and allow the vicar increasing opportunities to make decisions on his own, but no sermon should be preached in public worship without approval of the pastor.

Thorough and thoughtful supervision as vicars prepare deductive sermons—this is what the seminary's Worship Department asks of supervising pastors.

We also suggest the supervising pastor select the texts on which the vicar will preach. The texts may be chosen as part of general worship planning or with the vicar's specific skills and experience in mind. Keep in mind that the vicar has had one year of dogmatics (theology, anthropology, Christology). He has not studied Isaiah or the Old Testament prophets in class. We suggest that a majority of texts be Gospel and Epistle texts, and that Old Testament texts be assigned carefully (narratives may be better choices than prophetic writings—unless the teacher is willing to spend additional time with the student). Certainly, the vicar may be given an opportunity to select texts on his own for some occasional services or funerals and weddings.

As noted before, we do not allow a student to have his written sermon in the pulpit when he preaches in class. We encourage supervising pastors to follow that practice in what they expect of their vicars. We realize, however, that many experienced preachers use a manuscript in the pulpit. Our students have been made aware that their supervising pastor may have, for very good reasons, adopted this practice for his own preaching. The vicar will not assume that his supervising pastor either needs to defend that practice or persuade his vicar to adopt it. We are certainly aware that the heart of the issue is not necessarily what a man carries into the pulpit, but how he uses what he carries there. Yet many new preachers will never find how well they could preach without extensive notes if they are not given the opportunity to become familiar with this practice. We are also aware that some pastors have digital images projected onto a screen as they preach. We suggest waiting until the second half of the vicar year before introducing your vicar to the use of projected images in preaching. Even then, there may be wisdom in not making this a mandatory element of each of his sermons. We want seminary graduates to be able to preach freely so that pulpit notes, manuscripts, and projected images do not interfere with the preacher's ability to communicate eyeball-to-eyeball and heart-to-heart with his hearers. We ask pastors to assist us as we strive for that goal. Fundamentals must be drilled before finer points can be practiced.

It is important that experienced preachers remember that freedom from a standard homiletic structure flows from experience in using that structure. Some of our students have the ability to deviate from the

structure already during the vicar year, and others will do this as they gain experience as preachers. At this point in their training, however, students are most likely to progress as preachers if they are able to build on the knowledge, structure, and experience they gained during their first two years of training at the seminary.

Assistance to the Supervisor

Especially as the year progresses, the supervising pastor can expect his vicar to be able to take the pulpit when the pastor is away on vacation or involved in synodical work. The student has at least four sermons in his “barrel” that can be used, if necessary, and it may be wise to save these for unexpected circumstances.

Goals

The following summarizes our desires and expectations for vicars as preachers.

- A. Preaching assignments: Between 20 and 25 new sermons
 1. A typical schedule might be similar to this:
 - One Sunday each month in September through December.
 - A midweek Advent service and/or at one of the Christmas festival services.
 - Alternate Sundays during the Epiphany season.
 - Two Sundays and two midweek services during Lent.
 - A Holy Week service.
 - Alternate Sundays after Easter until the end of the vicar year.
 2. Vicars may certainly preach more often if they are serving in a dual parish or in a vacancy situation. But we would consider it extraordinary if a vicar prepared more than 25 new sermons.
- B. Preaching supervision by the pastor
 1. In most cases the pastor selects the sermon text.
 2. The pastor peruses the text study and analysis and offers advice and suggestions where necessary. Such a discussion of the text study and analysis will be especially important for more challenging texts, including helping the vicar proclaim Christ from an Old Testament text in a way that honors that text’s place in salvation history.
 3. The pastor assists as the vicar identifies these key elements of text analysis. As supervising pastors might expect (and remember), six different homiletics professors tend to have their own ways of teaching and sometimes emphasize certain points in different ways. It’s also true that students don’t always remember how technical terms were used in class. Perhaps the concepts we all teach in common may be more important than the specific terms themselves. Pastors can expect students to understand these elements of text analysis.

Key Elements of Text Analysis

What does the speaker or writer identify as the wrong or wrongs in the text? Does he state it in so many words in the text or is the wrong implied? Identifying the wrong in the text leads to the **malady** of the sermon.

How does this malady translate to those who will hear this sermon? What wrongs do you identify in your life and in theirs that are similar to the malady in the text? Is the malady a direct result of Satan’s power in their lives (e.g., lust) or of his influence in the world (e.g., pain or confusion)? Does a deeper problem underlie a superficial weakness (e.g., worry as an outgrowth of doubt)? How does the natural sinfulness of the human heart lead to the sins evident in the text?

Why did the speaker or writer address these words to his hearers? What changed attitudes or actions does he desire to see in people? Does he state his purpose in the text or is the purpose implied? Identifying the purpose of the text leads to the **virtue** of the sermon.

Why are you preaching this sermon? What specific attitudes and actions do you pray will change in your hearers and in yourself? Do you have a specific faith goal in mind: stronger, clearer, deeper faith? Do you have a specific action goal in mind: deeper love, purer living, bolder witness? The **virtue** you saw in the text and your desire for your hearers is essentially the **purpose, goal, or telic note** of the sermon.

As he identifies the malady and strives for the goal, does the speaker or writer use the law to condemn, threaten, or instruct? Does he use the law to break and beat down the sinful nature? Does he warn about deeper and more drastic failures? Does he clarify and remind people about God's way in their world? How will you use the law as you strive to change attitudes and actions? Will your primary use of the law in this sermon be to condemn, threaten, or instruct? Your choice here becomes the **specific law** of the sermon.

What does the speaker or writer identify as the key to overcoming the malady? Does he state it in so many words in the text or is this key implied? Identifying this key leads to the **cure** of the sermon.

God's love in Christ and the Savior's work of redemption, both his active and passive obedience, are the key to every facet of Christian faith and life and need to be a part of every sermon. The forgiveness of sins is the unchanging center of the gospel. In some texts, however, the speaker or writer may identify a facet of the gospel as the key to overcoming the sermon's specific malady: Jesus' power against temptation, his compassion for those in pain, his abiding presence for those who feel alone or forsaken, the power of his Word even though it seems weak, etc. Is the Savior's redemption the specific cure for the malady of the sermon (e.g., in a sermon on John 3:14-21) or does his redemption stand as the basis for a different specific cure (e.g., in a sermon on Mark 4:26-34)? When you have made that decision, you will have identified the **specific gospel** of the sermon. One last question: If the specific gospel of the sermon is not the redemptive work of Jesus, how will you show that this work supports the specific gospel you have identified?

When our homiletics students have discovered the malady, virtue, and cure of the sermon, the time has come for them to write a **Propositional Statement**. At this point in their career we feel such a statement is vital. The Propositional Statement is a single sentence which captures the purpose of the text as it proposes the **cure** that overcomes the **malady** and enables the **virtue/goal**. This sentence leads to the formation of the basic outline, the theme and the parts of the sermon.

The **basic outline** means to be a succinct, memorable, and pointed summary of the text and sermon. It may be in the form of a statement, an encouragement, or a direct question. It should reflect the unique language and imagery of the text but be practical for the hearers.

The parts of the sermon outline should reflect the division of the text discovered in the preacher's text study, and all parts should subdivide the theme. A basic outline on Matthew 18:15-20 might be:

When Your Brother Sins...Go!

1. With persistent love (15-17)
2. With divine authority (18-20)

In our experience students tend to default to law/gospel or problem/solution divisions. In most cases, these are more of a dogmatic template than an actual division of the text.

4. The supervising pastor receives, critiques, and approves the expanded outline and written sermon. He finally offers assessment of the preached sermon.

WORSHIP

Objectives

The vicar is to be given as many opportunities as possible to participate in, plan, and preside at Christian worship. Through such activities he should grow in his understanding of the important role that Christian worship plays in the life of the congregation.

Work, especially in the area of planning worship, will lead him to appreciate the time that is necessary to do a good job when setting up the worship calendar and putting together individual services. He will gain experience in working with the congregation's organists, choir directors, altar guild, and ushers. This work will also help the vicar become more familiar with the resources that are available to him for planning worship. Such planning may also help him to develop his own creativity and to channel it properly. Numerous opportunities to lead worship will improve the vicar's confidence and style as worship leader and will impress upon him the effort that it takes to lead worship well.

Training

During his junior year the vicar has studied the principles and objectives of Christian worship. He has studied the history of worship, the evolution of the Christian year, and the format of the liturgy. He also has learned the role that music plays in Christian worship and has seen the wide variety of music used by the church. In the area of practical development the vicar has had the opportunity to conduct at least portions of the liturgy in a congregational setting as a part of the Early Field Training (EFT)¹ program. Students are taught to respect local customs and to be innovative only with the encouragement of the pastor and the consent of the congregation.

Assistance from the Supervisor

Since the first activity that the vicar undertakes will no doubt be presiding at the Sunday service, he ought to be called upon right from the beginning to prepare thoroughly for the service. Lessons and prayers should be rehearsed so that they can be read smoothly and without stumbling. He should become acquainted with any local customs that are different from the service book's prescribed order. Neither the vicar's vestments nor his personal appearance should detract from the dignity of the service. He should be encouraged to preside at worship with a dignity that seems natural and to avoid anything that comes off as being either ostentatious or casual.

The stole, sometimes worn over either an academic robe or an alb, has long been considered a symbol of ordination (cf. *Christian Worship Manual*, page 97, 99-100 and *Christian Worship: Occasional Services*, page 250). Only guest pastors and faculty members wear the stole in services at the seminary, and students are advised not to wear the stole in congregations where they serve as guest preachers unless local custom demands it. Supervising pastors are encouraged to teach their members the symbolism of the stole and explain why the vicar does not wear it until he is ordained.

As soon as is practical, the vicar also should become involved in the congregation's worship planning. At regular intervals he should plan Sunday worship and prepare the service folder. It would also be good for him to gain some experience in planning a festival or special service. Perhaps, if the congregation's planning schedule allows it, he could even be permitted to plan a whole season of services. This would probably be best later in the vicarship, perhaps during the Easter season.

All in all, the vicar should see that worship, both as he plans it and presides at it, is worthy of much time and his best effort.

¹ In this program each junior is assigned to a congregation in the metropolitan Milwaukee area. During his junior and middle years he gains experience by observation and limited participation in practical areas of ministry, focusing especially on Sunday morning activities such as worship, Sunday school, and Bible study.

Assistance to the Supervisor

The vicar stands ready to preside at any service when called upon to do so. As he comes to see how worship is planned and conducted at the place of his vicarship, he ought to be able to take on a considerable amount of responsibility in planning for worship. Depending on the vicar's talents and training he may also be able to play the organ or another musical instrument and sing in the choir. Some vicars are able to direct a choir.

TEACHING

Objectives

The vicar is to be given every opportunity to gain experience in using the teaching techniques and skills which he has learned at the seminary. It is hoped that he will be able to gain valuable experience in several different teaching situations for which his middler year has prepared him (confirmation class, Sunday School, VBS, and Bible classes for both teens and adults). At the same time he is to observe the total program of education in the congregation in preparation for education classes when he returns to the seminary for his senior year. This observation might include participating in various classes as a member of the congregation and attending and auditing portions of the pastor's Bible information course (BIC). He may also be given the opportunity to teach a BIC.

In all this, please bear in mind that the vicar will be teaching basic Christian doctrine to youth and adults in a Christian congregation within a very short space of time. Experience in teaching confirmation class and/or BIC is essential.

Training

In the junior year the focus is on the theoretical aspects of education, with opportunity to apply those theories in very practical ways. Special emphasis is placed on:

1. the principles of learning for all age groups (elements of brain-based learning research, active learning, visual learning, peer learning);
2. educational psychology (touching the emotions along with teaching facts);
3. the strengths and weaknesses of the four basic techniques of teaching (telling, questioning, discussion, and self-directed projects);
4. an example of a taxonomy of questions (seven types of questions and the proper use of each);
5. the interaction of family, pastor, and congregation in the training of children;
6. the importance of having clear goals for one's individual teaching experiences.

The middler year course focuses much more on specific methodologies. For catechism instruction, students first practice a methodology which ensures overall organization of a particular class unit, as well as logical sequence among the individual pieces of a particular class unit. Significant emphasis is placed on the development of questions which promote higher-level thinking. When a basic catechism class teaching strategy is understood, students are then introduced to Learning Activities, a strategy which encourages personal engagement in Bible truth. Students are encouraged to carefully consider their goals for a lesson to determine which methodological approach will best target those goals.

Students spend eight periods in a Milwaukee-area Lutheran elementary school. They observe two catechism lessons taught by the supervising pastor. Then they each teach three catechism lessons themselves, alternating with a classmate who is doing the same. The education professor supervises the writing of these lessons. The student is given critique of his actual presentation by a supervising pastor or teacher. As time permits, the education professor visits students and offers additional feedback.

During the three lessons that a particular student teaches, he is encouraged to begin with the basics but then advance to experiment with alternative methodology. Students are required to teach at least one Learning Activity in the course of their three lessons.

Middlers spend the latter part of their middler education course exploring adult learning theory and digging more deeply into adult Bible class design. Again, they begin with a methodology which emphasizes clear goals, logical sequencing, and higher-level questions. They move forward to evaluate in greater detail how Learning Activities designed for adults can offer significant benefits.

The EFT program requires students to observe a Sunday school class junior year and a youth Bible class middler year. Teaching a class is optional.

Assistance from the Supervisor

In the teaching of the catechism, the vicar and the seminary will be served greatly if the supervising pastor will encourage his vicar to use the methods which the vicar has learned at the seminary. In lesson preparation the supervising pastor should discuss the key points which the vicar ought to develop in each lesson. In addition, the supervising pastor can assist the vicar by suggesting application and discussion questions that reflect the pastor's specific knowledge of his flock and the community in which he serves. The supervising pastor can also help the vicar as the vicar plans assignments for memorization and written work. The supervising pastor needs to give input so that all such assignments are coordinated with the pastor's overall objectives for his catechism curriculum.

The supervisor will observe the classroom or teaching situation from time to time, especially at the beginning of the vicar year, when the vicar is in a new teaching situation, or when the vicar is having any difficulty. These visits will offer opportunity for feedback on strengths and weaknesses. Areas of special concern will be clarity of doctrine, discipline, rapport, and proper speech. If the supervising pastor is unable to make the necessary visits, he should have the elementary school principal or a board of education member stand in for him. Occasionally, in the absence of such observers, the pastor might even record a class and later sit down with the vicar to evaluate the recording together.

If the vicar is to work with the youth, the supervising pastor can help the vicar by having a member of the congregation or a teacher serve as youth leader who will give continuity to the program from year to year.

If the vicar is to plan and administer a Vacation Bible School or teach a Bible information class, the supervising pastor should stand ready to give him plenty of help.

Assistance to the Supervisor

The vicar is prepared to teach catechism class. In the Lutheran elementary school setting he might teach the 7th grade class. Where the 7th and 8th grade are combined into one class, the supervising pastor might have the vicar teach several portions of the catechism during the year. It would be best if the vicar would get extensive experience in teaching catechism class rather than just teaching a class on occasion in the pastor's absence. If the congregation does not have a LES, the vicar is to be involved in the teaching of the public school confirmation class. The vicar is also prepared to teach a youth Bible class. As he gains experience in these teaching situations, the supervising pastor may also want to use him to serve as a substitute Sunday School teacher, conduct Sunday School teacher's meetings, teach a four- to six-week adult Bible class, and plan and administer a Vacation Bible School program.

PASTORAL CARE

General Objectives

The vicar year provides the seminary student with his greatest opportunity to develop and sharpen his skills in pastoral care. The vicar should become sensitive to the many different situations in which the pastor has the privilege and responsibility to offer individual spiritual nourishment, admonition, encouragement, and comfort to the members of his flock. He also ought to learn to recognize opportunities to reach out beyond the congregation with the gospel and how he can meet those

opportunities. In all aspects of pastoral care the vicar should learn to manifest an evangelical spirit that deeply loves and cares for each soul to whom he ministers and that mightily strives to do whatever is necessary for the ongoing welfare of that soul. We recognize that different men have different gifts in this area, and so we are very much interested in your evaluation of the vicar's overall ability to relate to people in a pastoral way.

Visitation

Objectives

Through his study of and his use of the Scriptures during his vicar year, the vicar should learn to appreciate with joy the application of law and gospel to the members of the congregation that can be done through personal visits with those members. He will grow in his understanding of the power and comfort of the Word.

Training

The vicar has spent a part of his middler year studying the Pastoral Epistles exegetically. He has been taught to recognize and find ways of applying to the parish ministry the many evangelical principles that these epistles provide. He has studied the art of pastoral care, including caring for the sick and bereaved, seeking out the straying, and making regular contact with those under his care. In the classroom during his junior year he has learned how to write a nursing home or shut-in call devotion. He may have made pastoral visitation calls with his EFT pastor. He has written and delivered two devotions in two separate nursing home services under the supervision of a WLS professor during his junior year.

Assistance from the Supervisor

The supervisor can help the vicar prepare for making calls on the shut-ins, the sick, and the dying. He should be taught to prepare devotions and prayers (building on what he has learned in the classroom and the EFT program), but also to be flexible and spontaneous so that he is able to adjust to the situation as he finds it while making his call. By sharing in the regular schedule of calls that his supervisor makes, the vicar will come to appreciate the importance of making pastoral calls on those confined at home or in institutions. By observing the model that his supervisor provides, the vicar will learn both what to say and the evangelical spirit in which to say it as he makes the different kinds of calls a pastor is expected to make.

Assistance to the Supervisor

After a few initial calls made with his supervisor, the vicar should be able to assume a regular portion of the pastoral calls on those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, or their own homes. After some time in the congregation and after thorough briefing by the supervisor, the vicar should also be able to make some carefully selected calls on inactive members and others who need pastoral ministrations. In the supervisor's absence the vicar should be able to visit the bereaved, give comfort, and make the necessary arrangements for the funeral.

Counseling

Objectives

Since training in pastoral counseling is offered to the student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary during his senior year, the vicar is not prepared for assignments that involve pre-marriage, marriage, divorce, or other pastoral counseling. However, during his vicar year the student has an opportunity to learn much

about the process of pastoral counseling, as well as its joys and trials, from his supervising pastor. By observing his supervisor or in discussion with his supervisor, the vicar should become sensitive to the many opportunities for law and gospel counseling which present themselves to the pastor. He can observe how to use Scripture in pastoral counseling and how to apply law and gospel to particular situations. Above all, the vicar should learn a love for souls, not only for the spiritually healthy, but also for all of the sheep who are struggling with temptation and sin and trouble. He should see the joyful comfort of the gospel in action.

Training

The vicar has received no formal training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in pastoral counseling. Such training is reserved for his senior year. During their years at Martin Luther College as well as during the middle year, many vicars have received training in interpersonal communication skills and have taken classes in abnormal psychology. If the vicar is married, he and his spouse should have had the experience of premarital counseling with a pastor. During his senior year the vicar will learn how to apply law and gospel to members in various counseling situations and how to use appropriate listening and questioning methods. He will study various methods of doing pre-marriage counseling.

Assistance from the Supervisor

The supervising pastor should share with the vicar what he does in premarital counseling and how he helps couples plan their wedding. The vicar should be allowed to observe the process in person, with the permission of the couple, so that he can actually see how the pastor does premarital counseling with his members and how a wedding is planned.

The supervising pastor should discuss with the vicar the normal process of pastoral counseling which he follows, i.e., how he schedules counseling sessions, how he structures the counseling sessions, how many times he meets with people, how he makes decisions regarding referrals and to whom he refers, and how he knows when no more counseling is needed with an individual or a couple.

The supervising pastor should invite the vicar to sit in on one or two selected counseling cases with him. This will require the promise of the vicar to keep such cases confidential. This will also require the written and dated permission of the counselees allowing the vicar to observe. This type of observation – students observing mentors doing counseling – is accepted practice in the training of secular counselors. At this level of his training for the ministry it must be expected that the student is mature enough to keep counseling cases confidential.

The supervising pastor should also monitor the spontaneous instances of the vicar's counseling with youth and with others, debrief the vicar regarding them, and direct any further counseling contact that may occur.

Assistance to the Supervisor

Counseling is not an area in which the vicar should be expected to provide assistance to his supervising pastor. When the vicar is involved in spontaneous counseling instances with youth and with others, the supervising pastor should be careful to debrief the vicar about the entire experience. In no case should the vicar be expected or promise to keep any counseling that he is involved with from his supervising pastor. In fact, the vicar must make it clear to those with whom he is counseling that he will share everything with his supervising pastor.

PERSONAL TIME MANAGEMENT

Objectives

The vicar should become adept at conscientiously being on time to meetings, classes, and all other appointments. He should learn how to plan and schedule work on longer range projects such as sermons. He should demonstrate a faithfulness in meeting deadlines and should learn how to conscientiously manage his schedule to allow time for devotional life, family life, and ministry. He should learn how to set priorities and goals in time management and how to keep them.

Training

The vicar's seminary experience began with an hour of instruction in personal time management. His professors expected him to be punctual with class attendance and to meet deadlines for his assignments, and his advisor routinely asked him about this. Perhaps the vicar will choose not to fill out a paper calendar mounted on his wall or perched on his desk. Nevertheless, every seminary student uses digital devices on a daily basis, and many of them are becoming adept with using them as helpful tools in planning the use of their time. Each vicar undoubtedly will need to grow in these disciplines.

By time management the seminary stresses the importance of prioritizing and scheduling daily tasks so that longer range projects such as sermons can also be completed according to schedule. Yet in connection with time management we also note the need for the vicar to balance devotional, family, and congregational responsibilities and to understand the tensions involved in seeking a wholesome balance.

Assistance from the Supervisor

As a part of their weekly meetings, the supervising pastor will share his own plan for managing devotional, family, and ministry time. He will discuss current time management issues with his vicar. He will monitor, encourage, and discuss the proper balance between the vicar's industrious use of ministry time and his faithful use of family time. He will stress the importance of personal and family devotional time with his vicar. At times the vicar's spouse may need to be a part of this discussion.

The supervising pastor will be sensitive in connection with his expectations of the vicar, especially during the first month or two of his vicar experience, so that the vicar is not overwhelmed.

Assistance to the Supervisor

A vicar who is conscientious, faithful, and honest about his personal time management will assist his supervisor in many ways because he will be reliable and trustworthy in accomplishing projects. A vicar who is mature with time management will earn the trust of his supervisor. He and his wife and family will be happy and eager to serve the Lord in many ways.

EVANGELISM

Objectives

The vicar will look to his supervisor for encouragement and example in making evangelism calls on the unchurched. Throughout the year he ought to learn to recognize opportunities to reach out beyond the congregation with the gospel. Not only will this include planning and scheduling evangelism calls, but also making law-gospel presentations and following up on the same. The vicar should begin to learn what steps may be taken to enhance the church's identity in the community. In all aspects of this evangelism work the vicar will learn the benefits of working with an evangelism committee in order to keep gospel outreach before the congregation's eyes.

Training

The vicar has received training in personal evangelism. He has learned a simple but thorough law-gospel approach to witnessing (*God's Great Exchange*). He has also learned to use alternative methods such as Bible storying to share the gospel, especially with people from different cultures. He has made two simulated evangelism calls on his instructor. He may have made calls through the seminary's EFT program.

Some vicars will have more experience in evangelism. The seminary regularly conducts outreach trips in which students put their evangelism training into practice. In their college years some students participate in one or more Daylight projects or perhaps have even taken extended time off from school in order to participate in an international ministry program. Seminarians may also serve as summer student assistants after one or both of their first two years at the seminary; much of this work involves evangelism.

It is worth noting what evangelism training the vicar has not yet received. Training to set up and administer a congregational evangelism program is reserved for the senior year.

Assistance from the Supervisor

Individual vicars will have already attained different comfort levels in making evangelism calls, depending on their prior experience. The supervisor can greatly assist the vicar by involving him as soon as possible in an organized plan for outreach, perhaps by including him on the evangelism committee. It would be good for the vicar first to make evangelism calls with another member of the committee. If such a formal program is not used in the congregation, the supervisor should take the vicar with him on such calls and later assign him a small number of prospects to call on. If possible, the vicar might see one or a number of prospects through the process from initial contact to Bible information class so that he is able to experience the joy and fruits of outreach work more fully.

Assistance to the Supervisor

Already early in the year the vicar should have no trouble assisting the congregation in outreach. He should be comfortable in calling on the unchurched as part of a team or by himself. The vicar will also be able to work with congregational leaders in setting up and running special outreach events.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Objectives

The vicar year provides the supervising pastor with the unique opportunity to model pastoral leadership for the student. While the principles of pastoral leadership are taught as part of the seminary curriculum, it is important for the development of future pastors to see how these principles apply in a practical manner as a pastor leads a congregation. This will assist the student in developing skills for pastoral leadership.

Training

The subject of pastoral leadership is not taught until the senior year. In that course students study the importance of knowing the history and culture of the congregation, the demographics of the areas where he serves, keeping a clear focus on the mission of the church, and working with the members to develop future plans of ministry for the congregation.

Besides the specific course in pastoral leadership, the faculty also strives to incorporate biblical principles of leadership in all areas of study, both by way of application and by modeling leadership skills

in the classroom. They also allow the students a healthy amount of freedom in seminary life so that the students cultivate the art of working with others. This also helps each student learn to manage his own schedule and carry out the planning necessary for the various activities both of seminary life and the student's personal life.

Assistance from the Supervisor

The most effective way to learn leadership skills is in a congregation. The supervising pastor plays a key role in this area.

To instill strong leadership skills the supervising pastor is asked to share the mission and vision of the congregation with the student. This will include explaining the history and culture of the congregation, present programs, and future ministry plans. He will also share with the student how the congregation hopes to realize those plans and include him in the planning meetings so he can observe the practical aspects of leadership, good planning, and positive communication and relationship skills. The supervising pastor will encourage the vicar to make the mission and vision of the congregation his own.

Assistance to the Supervisor

The teacher is also the learner. This also applies to pastoral leadership. As the supervising pastor works to teach leadership skills to the vicar, both by work and example, he will also continue to develop his own leadership skills. In this way the vicar will provide help for the supervising pastor even in the area of pastoral leadership.

STEWARDSHIP

Objectives

As pastors proclaim the whole will of God, they will want to include a program for Christian stewardship that focuses on all areas of Christian living. Often these are called the four Ts of Christian stewardship: time, treasure, talent, and temple. It is important for the pastor to educate his flock about the various aspects of Christian stewardship, not only presenting the law, but also presenting the gospel as proper motivation for Christian giving.

Training

The pastoral theology course that teaches the principles of Christian stewardship is included in the senior year. The matter of a pastor's personal stewardship is included in all three years of seminary training in the form of financial seminars which all of the students are expected to attend.

Assistance from the Supervisor

Besides an ongoing stewardship emphasis, the seminary asks that each supervising pastor work with the student in planning and implementing an annual stewardship program in the congregation. The form and emphasis of the program can vary depending on the needs and ministry of the congregation.

Assistance to the Supervisor

Even though the student has not covered the principles of Christian stewardship in a pastoral theology course, he will be able to assist the pastor in organizing and implementing an ongoing stewardship program in the congregation. This will include making appropriate applications in Bible class, explaining

stewardship principles in confirmation class and Bible information classes, preaching stewardship sermons, and assisting with a formal stewardship program.

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Objectives

The vicar is to become acquainted with the various groups and organizations within the congregation. As he becomes aware of their purpose and function he should be able to recognize the opportunity each offers for devotions, spiritual growth, information, Christian fellowship, and service to the congregation. The supervisor is encouraged to instruct the vicar in how each group serves under the mission and vision of the congregation.

Training

The study of groups and organizations within the congregation becomes part of the vicar's training after he returns from his vicar year. What he takes with him when he goes out vicaring is mostly what he has learned from observation and/or experience in his home congregation or in his EFT congregation.

Assistance from the Supervisor

The supervising pastor will make it possible for the vicar to attend the meetings of the various groups and organizations, at least on an occasional basis. He can share with the vicar the purpose and usefulness which each group serves and the opportunities for devotion, enrichment, and service on the part of the members of the organization. The supervisor will be able to demonstrate a judicious use of the pastor's time in participating in and supervising these organizations without infringing upon time for other aspects of the ministry.

Assistance to the Supervisor

In many congregations the vicar has a large role in the youth program. We encourage ongoing congregational leadership, with the vicar providing assistance but not being put in charge of the program. Outside of the youth program, help to the supervising pastor with groups and organizations will be minimal, at least early in the vicar year. Once the vicar has been introduced to the respective groups and organizations, he might be asked to lead the devotion or even present a topic.

ADMINISTRATION

Objectives

The vicar is to learn as much as possible concerning administration in the congregation. As he observes the pastor and elected leaders functioning in their administrative duties, the vicar will develop an appreciation for the importance of good administration.

Training

Basic principles of administration are not taught until the vicar returns for his senior year.

Assistance from the Supervisor

The supervising pastor will serve as a role model for the vicar. An example of good administrative skills and strong, evangelical leadership in the congregation will leave a lasting impression on the vicar. If the supervising pastor is involved in leadership responsibilities or administrative duties beyond the congregation (circuit, conference, district, synod), he can permit the vicar to observe him carrying out those duties insofar as time and circumstance permit. Even though the vicar is not to be used as a church secretary, he should become acquainted with such clerical procedures as the preparation of a Sunday bulletin, the keeping of church records, and the processing of transfers of membership.

Assistance to the Supervisor

Help to the supervising pastor will be minimal. After the vicar has been able to observe others in their administrative duties, he might be asked to say a prayer or conduct a devotion for a meeting. If he is to do any other administrative work, it should not be without help from the supervising pastor.

WIFE/FAMILY

This is a key section. The seminary has little to no knowledge of the wives. Except in rare cases, we have not been able to observe the wives' gifts or assess their strengths and weaknesses. What this means is that the most objective and data-based assessment will be that which the supervising pastor provides on the basis of the vicar year. So, if the vicar is married, the Assignment Committee is very much interested in what the supervising pastor has observed. Especially if there are significant problems, his report can give the seminary a place to start in engaging the husband and his wife in further counseling.

THE VICAR REPORT

Toward the end of the vicar's year of service the seminary president will send the supervisor a *Vicar Report Form*. For several reasons it is important that the completed report be filed before the vicar begins his senior year. First, the reports are circulated among faculty members so that instructors can be aware of any area of possible weakness which the student will need to work on during his senior year. Then, the report serves as the basis for the advisor's consultation with the student as he begins his final year of training. Also, if the vicar had a serious problem which was not resolved by the end of the vicar year, the seminary president may meet with the supervising pastor and the vicar to discuss the problem. Finally, the report is an important resource for the graduate's characterization, which is submitted to the synod's Assignment Committee.

The *Vicar Report Form* calls for some subjective evaluations on the supervisor's part. The seminary faculty will appreciate the supervisor's candid opinions regarding "General Work Habits" and "Personality Traits." This will alert the faculty to any area of weakness the supervisor may note, and the faculty can then make efforts to help the student overcome the weakness during his senior year.

Concerning the "Personality Traits" section it is suggested that the supervisor:

- Call any areas of weakness to the vicar's attention as early as seems wise and as often as seems necessary.
- Discuss possible areas for improvement one more time before the vicar leaves.

Concerning the "General Work Habits" section it is suggested that the supervisor:

- Call any areas of weakness to the vicar's attention as early as seems wise and as often as seems necessary.
- Remember the importance of modeling and consider providing the vicar with information on how you organize your work schedule.
- Be specific, where possible, in filling out the report.

- Discuss possible areas for needed improvement one more time before the vicar leaves.

Above all, remember that we are looking not simply for a list of the *ministerial activities* in which the vicar has engaged during the year, but for your *evaluation* of his aptitude to serve in these various areas.

Under the heading “Recommendation,” we are asking for two forms of evaluation: the first is general, while the second is specific. In the first box, the absence of a checkmark will suggest that the supervising pastor questions whether the vicar can be recommended for ministry of any kind. In essence, no recommendation means that the vicar has failed his vicar year and will need to repeat it. In the next section, the supervisor is asked to provide a number rating for the various types of ministry to which the vicar might soon be called and the vicar’s aptitude for each. In filling out this section the supervisor need not feel that he is unilaterally determining the man’s future in pastoral ministry. The supervisor’s judgment will become a part of the total information with which the faculty works in determining how best the individual can serve his Lord.

“Additional Remarks” provides an opportunity for the supervisor to elaborate on any points he noted earlier. It also allows for calling attention to anything which the report has not already elicited.

The seminary assumes that the supervising pastor will share the contents of the report with the vicar.

Two suggestions:

- 1) give the vicar a copy of the report and let him assess himself, and then sit down together and compare assessments; and
- 2) meet with the vicar halfway through the vicar year specifically for a mid-year assessment, possibly using the vicar report form as your assessment tool.

While it may be valuable to ask the vicar for his own self-assessment, please bear in mind that the seminary is interested in your evaluation. We crave your seasoned judgment.

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Be assured that the seminary is grateful for the role vicar supervisors play in the training of a future pastor. May the Lord bless the efforts you put forth for the spiritual and professional growth and development of your vicar, for the welfare of Christ’s church.