Teaching Parish Manual

In Partnership with ELCA Congregations in the San Francisco Bay Area

Contextual Education Office
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
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Overview of the Teaching Parish Program

The Teaching Parish Program is designed to expose Master of Divinity candidates to the basic, various, and complex areas of ministry in a congregation and beyond the congregation, through time-limited direct observation and hands-on practice.

Teaching Parish is different from Internship in both time and scope. Teaching Parish is only 6 hours per week. Teaching Parish is more focused on providing opportunities for exposure to the broad and complex areas of ordained ministry than in perfection of skills in those areas. Pastoral skills will start to develop during Teaching Parish as students practice in the diverse areas of ministry in the congregation. Through the exposure that Teaching Parish provides and the reflection sessions with the supervising pastor and the Teaching Parish lay committee, the students will have the opportunity to reflect on their developing sense of God’s call to the ordained role.

The Teaching Parish Program at PLTS extends over two academic years. The student is placed in a parish for 3 semesters. The student is strongly encouraged to enroll in the Reading Congregations course in a semester prior to that in which she or he begins the Teaching Parish program.

Foci of the Three Semesters of the Teaching Parish Program

Over the course of the three semesters of the Teaching Parish Program, we hope that the students will have the opportunity to delve into the following areas with a little more depth while also getting a general understanding of all of the aspects of church life:

- Semester One: Worship
- Semester Two: Administration
- Semester Three: Education

Supervision and Reflection

Throughout the student’s involvement with the local parish, time for supervision and reflection are vital. To aid in this process, we ask for the following commitments from the Supervising Pastor and Lay Committee:

- Supervising Pastor and student meeting once per month
- Lay Committee and student meet twice per semester

The student uses the reflection sessions with the supervising pastor and the lay committee to discern their sense of call and to integrate their academic and field learning.
**Allocation of Time**

Knowing that no two weeks look the same in any ministry setting, our hope is that the following general outline for time allocation will assist the Pastor and the student in deciding where and how the student will engage with the community for the Teaching Parish Program. The weekly six hours should roughly be divided into this manner:

- 1 – 2 hours on Sunday (for worship, coffee hour, Sunday School, Adult Education, etc.)
- 1 – 2 hours during the week for administrative meetings (supervision with pastor or Lay Committee, staff meetings, any synodical meetings or gatherings that might be useful and appropriate, etc.)
- 1 – 2 hours for other church activities and preparation time (Bible studies, social gatherings, etc.)

Note: Travel time to and from the parish is not to be included in the hours counted toward the completion of the Teaching Parish requirement.

**Evaluation**

At the end of each Semester, the Supervising Pastor, the Lay Committee, and the student are asked to complete evaluation forms, discuss them with each other, and submit them to the Office of Contextual Education at PLTS. (Evaluation Forms can be found on pages 14 – 21 of this Manual)
Goals and Expectations

Goals of the Teaching Parish Program

- Offer time for the student to utilize the supervising pastor as a mentor
- Expose the student to the varied areas of pastoral ministry in the congregation
- Facilitate understanding of parish and community dynamics
- Integrate the academic disciplines with the practice of ministry
- Expose the student to ministries beyond the congregation (examples: ecumenical ministry, jail ministry, community organizing)

To successfully accomplish these goals, the supervising pastor, along with the lay committee, must be available and willing to mentor and support the student. This partnership is vital for the development of the student. The student is expected to be open to the learning process and draw on these partners for feedback and support.

The Contextual Education Office is always available to supervising pastors, lay committees, and students to assist in the implementation of the Teaching Parish Program. The Contextual Education Office appreciates the opportunity to be in dialogue with those who have concerns or joys to share regarding their involvement in the program.

In cases of conflict or other serious issues with students and supervising pastors, the Contextual Education Office should be informed, but will encourage the parties involved to bring about their own resolution if at all possible.

Financial Compensation

The congregation may decide to reimburse the student for congregational business mileage and commuting mileage including, bridge tolls/public transportation to and from their home. The reimbursement rate should be the same as staff members of the congregation. No other financial compensation is expected.
Expectations of the Supervising Pastor

1. Attend orientation and training session.

2. Be willing to work with the students as they grow personally, theologically, and as pastors.

3. Provide learning and leadership opportunities in the varied aspects of worship and parish life. This includes ministry beyond the congregation during the student’s third semester.

4. Meet with the student at least once a month for reflection sessions.

5. Supervise the learning experience and offer feedback to the student.

6. Remain focused on the student’s role as learner. The student is expected to be actively involved with the parish a maximum of 6 hours per week, excluding travel time to/from home.

7. Establish a Teaching Parish Lay Committee (3-6 members) and orient the committee to its responsibilities PRIOR to the student’s arrival.

8. Complete student evaluations in a timely manner as requested by the Seminary.

9. Contact the Contextual Education Office at PLTS if you have questions or concerns.

These expectations outline the commitment made by the supervisor to PLTS and to the student. By using this outline the supervising pastor will provide the student the exposure to parish life that the Teaching Parish program is designed to do. The supervising pastor may choose to enhance a student’s academic program by coordinating parish assignments with classes the student is enrolled in at PLTS, for instance preaching a sermon at the parish during or after the student’s preaching class. Professors at the seminary may give assignments to the students to be completed at the Teaching Parish site.

Gifts and Skills of Lay Committee Members:
When establishing the Lay Committee, the supervising pastor may want to consider these traits.

- Be faithful in worship attendance
- Be willing to pray for the student regularly and to show their care and support
- Be capable of giving articulate, honest, but constructive feedback regarding the student’s ministry skills, especially worship leadership
- Be eager to share experiences and insights about their own ministry in daily life
- Be willing to set aside the necessary time for committee meetings (two meetings each semester)
- Be involved and knowledgeable of ministries beyond the congregation with which the congregation is involved or can develop
Expectations of the Lay Committee

1. Support the student as a learner, not a staff member.

2. Meet with the student two times each semester for feedback and support.

3. Help the student to work on his/her boundaries so he/she does not become entangled in congregational conflicts.

4. Support learning experiences assigned to the student by the supervising pastor.

5. Arrange for payment of travel expenses to the student, if provided. These would include mileage and tolls or public transportation fees.

6. Complete student evaluations in a timely manner as requested by the Seminary.

Possible topics for discussion during Lay Committee meetings:

- Share stories about your faith life
- Discuss what opportunities for learning you feel this congregation can give
- Talk about the congregation’s history and how that influences the congregation today
- How does the congregation express its “Lutheranism”
- Review the seminarian’s learning and performance in congregation’s ministry
- Discuss classroom learning and how the student applies that to congregational ministry
- Discuss ministry beyond the congregation
- Review, discuss, and sign the Teaching Parish Report
Expectations of the Student

1. Spend a six hours per week on Teaching Parish commitments. These hours include preparation time and time spent at the site (worship/coffee hour included) or off-site in ministry related to the congregation. They exclude travel time to and from home.

2. Identify learning goals with the supervising pastor within the first month.

3. Remain focused on role of learner.

4. Refuse involvement with internal conflicts of the congregation.

5. Meet with the lay committee to set agendas for meetings.

6. Submit mileage reimbursement request to the Lay Committee, if appropriate.

7. Complete student evaluation forms in a timely manner as requested by the Seminary.
Installation Services for Teaching Parish Students

The following services are offered as suggestions only. The individual parish is welcome to design its own service for introducing and welcoming the teaching parish student.

Service #1

**President of the Council:** After prayerful deliberation, we of the Council of *(NAME OF CHURCH)*, appoint *(NAME)* to the position of Teaching Parish Student of *(NAME OF CHURCH)*.

**Pastor:** Our Lord, who came among us as a servant, calls us to faith and a life of loving service to our neighbor. You come to us as one who has been called to be among this community of the faithful as a student, as one who will test and examine *herself/himself* in relation to this body of Christ, to study and risk *herself/himself* in developing an openness to the leading of the Spirit, to receive and welcome the wisdom and faithfulness of members of this congregation, so that as you grow in your life’s work our Lord Jesus will shape you according to his will.

A lesson from St. Paul’s letter to his beloved Timothy:
You, Timothy, man of God: Run for your life... Pursue a righteous life - a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, and courtesy. Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses.

**Pastor:** Will you assume this position in the confidence that God has led you to a place here among us?

**Candidate:** I will, and I ask God to help me.

**Pastor:** Will you carry out the responsibilities of this position in accordance with the teachings and practice of the Lutheran Church?

**Candidate:** I will, and I ask God to help me.

**Pastor:** Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scripture and faithful in your use of the means of grace and in prayer?

**Candidate:** I will, and I ask God to help me.

**Pastor:** Will you trust in God’s care, seek to grow in love for those among whom you learn, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the Gospel of God with a godly life?

**Candidate:** I will, and I ask God to help me.

**Pastor:** *(NAME)*, I install you as the Teaching Parish Student of *(NAME OF CHURCH)*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** Amen.
Pastor: Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to do them. Amen.

The candidate may kneel.

Pastor: Gracious God, as you called disciples through the compelling word of your Son, Jesus Christ, and provided for them abundant opportunity to learn and develop and deepen in the new life of the Kingdom which your Son embodied, so now grant to (NAME) wisdom to learn, courage to risk, strength to act, humility to grow, and mercy to lay hold of your grace; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God, our heavenly Father, guide, bless and keep you faithful in the way to which you have been called. Amen

The liturgy continues with the prayers
Service #2

**Pastor:** Dear Christian friends: Baptized into the priesthood of Christ, we all are called to offer ourselves to the Lord of the Church in thanksgiving for what God has done for us. It is our privilege to recognize and support those who are engaged in the work of this congregation, and especially today *(NAME)* who will serve with us and among us as a teaching parish student. The teaching parish experience, whereby a student devotes six hours per week to learning and service in a congregation, is a required element in the Master of Divinity program at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley.

*(NAME)*, having declared your desire to learn and serve within this congregation, will you follow Christ's own example of humble service?

**Student:** Yes, with God’s help.

**Pastor:** Let us pray...Gracious God, source of all wisdom, whose Spirit empowers our service, accompany and bless *(NAME)* in her/his listening, learning, questioning, and serving. May s/he grow in your love and in *her/his* understanding of the role of Pastor. Give *her/him* health and strength to do faithfully all that you ask of *her/him*; through Jesus the Christ.

**Congregation:** Amen.

**Pastor:** And you, people of God, will you support *(NAME)*? Will you pray for *her/him*, speak well of *her/him*? Will you offer *her/him* your gifts and your guidance so that s/he might be and become a full member of this community of faith and be strengthened for *her/his* work?

**Congregation:** We will.

**Pastor:** Let us pray...For all who offer themselves in your name, we give thanks, O God. Give them the joy of service and the promise of your constant care and guidance. Help us all to be willing servants and thankful recipients of ministry, that your name be glorified, your people live in peace, and your will be done; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Friend.

**Congregation:** Amen.

*The student remains at the altar rail for the Prayer of the Church and joins the pastor in sharing the peace with the congregation.*
Prayers for Teaching Parish Students

As student begins serving:

**Pastor:** Look with love, O God, upon your servant (NAME), as s/he begins this term of ministering in our parish. Let it be for her/him a time of learning even as it is for us an opportunity to partner with our seminary in the preparation of future pastors. As s/he shares her/his time and skill and faith with us, move us to prayers of blessing for her/his work. Lead us to graciously receive her/his ministry, so that together we might grow in your grace and in our servant calling. This we pray through Jesus the Christ.

**Congregation:** Amen.

As student completes service:

**Pastor:** Gracious Shepherd, we bless you for the ministry of your servant, (NAME) and for all that s/he has learned and accomplished these past months. We also bless you for what we have learned and experienced together. Your Word has been fruitful, your mercy abundant, and so we offer you our thanks and our praise.

Continue to strengthen (NAME) by your Holy Spirit for faithful living and future ministry. May what s/he has learned and experienced here make her/him confident and eager for service in your Church. Bless her/him and give her/him joy in what is past and hope for what is yet to be, whether internship or further study. All this we pray through our Savior Jesus Christ.

**Congregation:** Amen.
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Teaching Parish – Supervisor and Student Agreement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>This agreement certifies that</th>
<th>(Student Name)</th>
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<td>has been assigned</td>
<td>(Congregation, City)</td>
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as a Teaching Parish site, supervised by

(Supervisor)

Students work **6 hours** a week during:

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<th>Semester</th>
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*Note: Teaching Parish excludes both January and summer intersessions*

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<th>Student’s Signature</th>
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<th>Supervisor’s Signature</th>
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Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Teaching Parish – First & Second Semester Evaluation

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Assessor (i.e. Student, Supervisor, Committee): ________________________________
Semester (i.e. First or Second): ____________________________________________

**Instructions**
*In the space provided below, please give an overall assessment of the student's/your strengths and areas for growth at this point in the Teaching Parish experience.*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Please list 2 – 3 areas of strength:</th>
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<th>Please list 2 – 3 areas for growth:</th>
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Instructions
Please indicate in the appropriate box where you rate the student/yourself. “I.E.” represents “Insufficient Evidence.” If you mark “Concerns,” please be sure to indicate them in the space provided below each table. In the number ranking, “1” is the lowest rating while a “4” is the highest rating. The space below each table may also be used to highlight accolades if you so choose.

Professional Demeanor

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shows up when expected to:</th>
<th>I.E.</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<td>Supervisory Meetings</td>
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<td>Meeting with Lay Committee</td>
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<td>Activities with the church community</td>
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<th>Dresses Appropriately</th>
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<td>Engages with others in an appropriate manner</td>
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<td>Demonstrates good professional boundaries</td>
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<td>Completes projects in a timely manner</td>
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Comments:

Demonstrates Openness to Learning

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<tr>
<th>Overall attitude in this area</th>
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<td>Seeks ways to be connected with and learning from the congregation</td>
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Comments:
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☐ I have read my supervisor’s/lay committee’s assessment and agree that it is a fair evaluation of me and my internship experience.

☐ I have read my supervisor’s/lay committee’s assessment and agree with the evaluation with the following exceptions or additions:

Signatures:

*Print and discuss this evaluation before you sign it.*

Student’s Signature

Date

Supervisor’s Signature

Date

Lay Committee Chairperson’s Signature

Date

Instructions for submitting evaluation:

*Please mail completed, signed evaluations to: PLTS Contextual Education Office
2770 Marin Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94708
OR, please save and email completed evaluations to: contexted@plts.edu
*Signature Page must be mailed separately*
Student Name: 

Assessor (i.e. Student, Supervisor, Committee): 

Instructions
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Please list 2 – 3 areas for growth:
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Comments:
## Worship Leadership and Preaching

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<td>Informed by a clear theology of worship and the sacraments</td>
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<td>Interprets biblical texts faithfully in sermons</td>
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<td>Effective in leading public prayer</td>
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<td>Demonstrates poise and presence in his/her role as worship leader/preacher</td>
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<td>Uses effective voice in leading worship and preaching (e.g., volume, clarity, inflection)</td>
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<td>Pays attention to congregational/community context in preaching/worship leadership</td>
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<td>Organizes sermons with clarity</td>
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### Comments:

Describe how the student observed/served this setting in ministries “beyond the congregation:”

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19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What areas of ministry need to be given highest priority during internship?</th>
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<th>Areas of special concern?</th>
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Student’s Response

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| Lay Committee Chairperson’s Signature | Date |

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OR, please save and email completed evaluations to: contexted@plts.edu
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