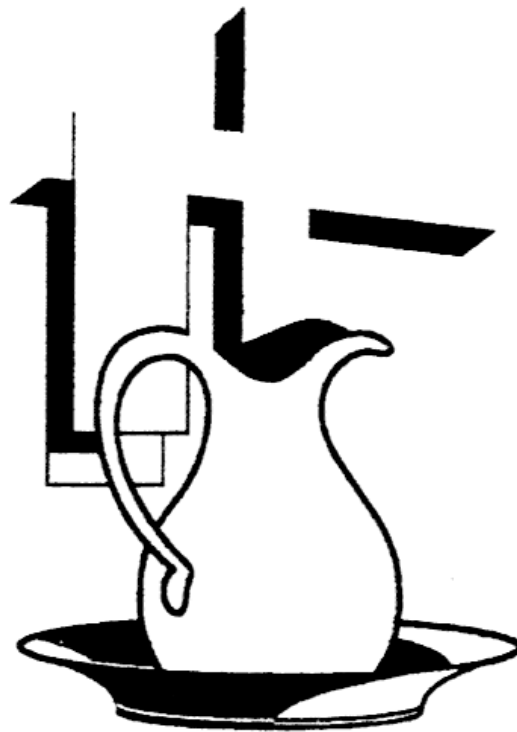


# **MENTOR & SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK**



## **Parish Ministry Associate Program**

### **Nebraska Synod, ELCA**

January 2021

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**DEFINITIONS**

Mentor: an ordained ELCA pastor working with a PMA Student or an unassigned PMA.

Supervisor: an ordained ELCA pastor supervising an assigned PMA or PMA on your church staff.

PMA Student: one who has not completed his/her studies.

Certified PMA: a PMA who has completed her/his studies and is certified for ministry.

Unassigned PMA: a PMA who has completed studies, is certified for ministry, and serving in her/his home congregation.

Assigned PMA: a PMA who has completed studies, is certified for ministry, and assigned by the bishop to serve a congregation.

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**ANNUAL DEADLINES**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item Due</b>	<b>For Whom</b>
May 1	Mentor/Supervisor/Council Annual Evaluation	All PMAs and PMA Students
May 1	Renewal of Certification Application	PMAs
May 1	Renewal of Sacrament Authorization Request	Congregations served by PMAs

July 1            Deadline for late requests for Renewal of Certification    PMAs (\$25 late fee required)  
*July 1 - June 30: Period for which PMAs are certified (application for renewal is required annually)*

## SUMMARY OF SUPERVISION AND REPORTS DUE

PMA Type	Has a Mentor	Has a Supervisor	Annual Report from Mentor	Annual Report from Supervisor	Annual Report from Council	Deadline for Reports
Student <sup>1</sup>	X		X			May 1
Unassigned	X		X			May 1
On Staff		X <sup>2</sup>		X	X	May 1
Assigned		X		X	X	May 1

<sup>1</sup> A student serving on a congregation’s staff will follow the On Staff reporting pattern.

<sup>3</sup> The supervisor is the ordained pastor who is head of staff where the PMA serves on staff.

## PMA PROGRAM RESOURCES ONLINE

PMA handbooks, forms, and other documents are on the synod website, under the News & Resources tab. From there click on resources, then on “For those in discernment.” Then click on “Parish Ministry Associate Program” to access the documents.

## PMA PROGRAM STAFF & OFFICE

### PMA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Pastor Steve Meysing, Assistant to the Bishop  
[steve@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:steve@nebraskasynod.org)  
 308-530-5740

### PMA ADMINISTRATOR

Pastor Carol Mapa  
[pma@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:pma@nebraskasynod.org)  
 308-532-0250, press 4 for PMA Office

**PMA OFFICE:** PO Box 1462, North Platte, NE 69103-1462

The PMA Administrator normally works eight to twelve hours per week.

The program is overseen by a **PMA Steering Committee** comprised of PMAs and pastors approved by the bishop. One PMA Student also serves on the committee.

## MENTORING A PMA STUDENT

### APPLICATION PROCESS

- **Discuss** with the potential student his/her sense of call, spiritual maturity, leadership skills, commitment to the ELCA, and willingness to learn and serve. Include those reflections on the application packet’s **recommendation forms from the council and pastor.**

- Work with the prospective student and the council to determine the level of **financial support the congregation will provide** for PMA studies.
- Need-based scholarships for courses are available so that cost does not stand in the way of PMA studies. Direct the applicant to contact the PMA Program Director for confidential consideration.
- The mentoring pastor shall **review and understand the PMA Student Handbook and Mentor and Supervisor Handbook**. With the student **sign and return to the PMA Office the acknowledgement page of the PMA Student Handbook and the Mentor and Supervisor Handbook**.

#### DURING STUDIES

- Each PMA Student **must have an ordained ELCA pastor as a mentor**. Usually their home pastor, the mentor provides guidance, wisdom, support, and walks beside the student during their studies.
- All PMA Students are required to watch and discuss with their mentor the DVD course “How Lutherans Interpret the Bible.” **This is a pre-requisite course and must be completed before taking any other PMA courses**. Upon completion of the course, the mentor must send a brief summary of how the student grasped the content of the course and any concerns that arose.
- Be intentional in checking with the PMA Student about completing coursework in a timely manner, especially writing the paper.
- **Read drafts of each paper** that the student writes and offer constructive feedback to the student before they submit the paper for course credit.
- Upon beginning the preaching course, provide the student with **opportunities to preach**. Work with the student as she/he prepares the sermon and receives feedback.
- Remind the student that he/she is not eligible to provide pulpit supply as a PMA Student until the following courses have been completed: How Lutherans Interpret the Bible; Old Testament; New Testament; Systematic Theology; Lutheran Confessions; Foundations of Biblical Preaching.
- Remind the PMA Student that they must attend at least two PMA Convocations in order to be eligible for certification as a PMA. Mentors are welcome to attend Convocations.
- Work with the PMA Student to ensure that the **required Mentor/Supervisor/Council Annual Evaluation** is submitted to the PMA Office by May 1.
- Make sure the student has read and understood *Definition and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*, available at [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org).

#### ONCE CERTIFIED FOR MINISTRY

- After the Certification for Ministry rite is celebrated at synod assembly or another synod event, plan a **congregational recognition** of the student’s accomplishment in her/his home congregation.
- Work with the council and/or congregation on a **gift to the PMA**. Meaningful gifts include an alb, cincture(s), PMA shirts (when available through the PMA Office), and theological books of interest to the new PMA. PMAs receive a medallion and lapel pin at their certification.

### **MENTORING AN UNASSIGNED PMA or SUPERVISING A PMA ON YOUR STAFF**

#### POLICIES AND REPORTS

- The mentoring/supervising pastor shall **review and understand the Certified PMA Handbook**.

- **Complete the annual Mentor/Supervisor/Council Annual Evaluation by May 1**, and send it to the PMA Office. Use this occasion for conversation with you PMA about how their gifts can be utilized in the congregation's ministry in the coming year.
- The PMA must apply for **renewal of certification** by May 1 each year. Renewal decisions are based on fulfillment of the continuing education requirements and abiding by PMA Program guidelines. The PMA alone is responsible for submitting the annual request for renewal. Late requests for renewal are due July 1, with a decision on renewal by July 31, and certification valid until the following June 30. A \$25 late fee is required. After July 1, PMA certification is revoked. Applications for reinstatement are due the following May 1.
- Like rostered ministers of the ELCA, PMAs are accountable to the bishop and **subject to discipline by the bishop.**
- The mentoring/supervising pastor shall **review and understand the Certified (or Student, if applicable) PMA Handbook and the Mentor and Supervisor Handbook.** With the PMA **sign and return to the PMA Office the acknowledgement page of the Certified (or Student, if applicable) PMA Handbook and the Mentor and Supervisor Handbook.**

## LEARNING

- Encourage the PMA to attend the **annual PMA Convocation.** This event counts toward the continuing education requirement. Mentors and supervisors are welcome to attend Convocations.
- **Encourage the PMA to meet the requirement of 12 hours of continuing education per year.** Let them know about continuing education events you are aware of. A wide variety of ways to earn continuing education credit is available and specified in the Certified PMA Handbook.
- For PMA **continuing education credits**, the mentor/supervisor and PMA could together read and reflect on a book.

## SERVING

- Should the need arise, remind the PMA that “PMAs always serve in **partnership** with ordained pastors, not independent of ordained pastors” (Certified PMA Handbook, Introduction).
- Encourage a PMA on your church staff to **participate in text study groups, ministerial association, and cluster.**
- If the PMA has difficulty accessing people who are in hospitals, care or correctional facilities as part of the ministry you have asked them to do, **you may request from the PMA Office an ID card signed by the bishop identifying the PMA as authorized for these ministries.**
- See the Certified PMA Handbook for policies on PMAs and **funerals, weddings, and counseling.**
- PMAs are not to offer any counseling as part of their ministries unless they hold the appropriate credentials. Only assigned PMAs who have been trained and approved per the requirements of Section 11 may provide pre-marital counseling.
- If the PMA wants to be approved to **conduct funerals or weddings independently** in the congregation you serve, and you approve of this, work with the PMA to meet the requirements for this privilege outlined in the Certified PMA Handbook.
- Remember, at the pastor's discretion, a PMA may **preach at a funeral or wedding** if she/he is the one who worked most closely with the deceased or his/her family.
- Remember that PMAs are not to seek ordination outside of the ELCA in order to officiate at weddings.
- PMAs may not conduct any **counseling** unless they hold the appropriate credentials. PMAs authorized for weddings may conduct pre-marital counseling.

- PMAs will not wear **clerical attire** (i.e. clerical collars, clergy or diaconal stoles) and will not use the **title** Pastor, Deacon, or Vicar.
- PMAs are not certified for **sacraments** for individual days or services.

## SUPERVISING AN ASSIGNED PMA

### POLICIES AND REPORTS

- The supervising pastor shall **review and understand the Certified PMA Handbook and the Mentor and Supervisor Handbook**. With the student **sign and return to the PMA Office the acknowledgement page of the Certified (or Student, if applicable) PMA Handbook and the Mentor & Supervisor Handbook**.
- The PMA must apply for **renewal of certification** by May 1 each year. Renewal decisions are based on fulfillment of the continuing education requirements and abiding by PMA Program guidelines. The PMA alone is responsible for submitting the annual request for renewal. Late requests for renewal are due July 1, with a decision on renewal by July 31, and certification valid until the following June 30. A \$25 late fee is required. After July 1 PMA certification is revoked. Applications for reinstatement are due the following May 1.
- The supervising pastor shall have **a monthly conversation/consultation** with the assigned PMA.
- **Annually meet with the council of the church to which the PMA is assigned** to review how ministry is unfolding with the PMA, answer questions, and offer guidance as needed.
- Review the PMA Program guidelines described in the Certified PMA Handbook and the Mentors and Supervisors Handbook with the council.
- **Receive concerns** of the congregation the PMA is assigned to and share them with the PMA Office.
- Like rostered leaders of the ELCA, PMAs are **accountable to and subject to discipline by the bishop**.
- Complete the **Mentor/Supervisor/Council Annual Evaluation by May 1** and send it to the PMA Office.

### LEARNING

- Encourage participation in **text study groups, ministerial association, and cluster**.
- **Encourage the PMA to meet the requirement of 12 hours of continuing education per year**. Let them know about continuing education events you are aware of. A wide variety of ways to earn continuing education credit is available and specified in the Certified PMA Handbook.
- Encourage the Assigned PMA to attend the **annual PMA Convocation**. This event counts toward the continuing education requirement. Supervisors are welcome to attend Convocations.
- For **PMA continuing education credits**, the mentor/supervisor and PMA could together read and reflect on a book.

### SERVING

- Teach the assigned PMA how to keep **congregational records, record pastoral acts, complete the ELCA parochial report and other annual forms** for our ELCA and synod.
- As necessary, coach the PMA for their role and participation in **council meetings**.
- If the Assigned PMA has difficulty accessing people who are in hospitals, care or correctional facilities, **the Assigned PMA may request from the PMA Office an ID card signed by the bishop identifying the PMA as authorized for ministry**.

- See the Certified PMA Handbook for policies on PMAs and **funerals, weddings, and counseling**. If the assigned PMA wants to be approved to conduct **funerals or weddings** independently in the congregation he/she is assigned to, work with the PMA to meet the requirements for this privilege outlined in the Certified PMA Handbook. Remember that PMAs are not to seek ordination outside of the ELCA in order to officiate at weddings.
- PMAs are not to offer any counseling as part of their ministries unless they hold the appropriate credentials. Only assigned PMAs who have been trained and approved per the requirements of Section 11 may provide pre-marital counseling.
- Assigned PMAs will not wear **clerical attire** (i.e. clerical collars, clergy or diaconal stoles) and will not use the **title** Pastor, Deacon, or Vicar.
- Assigned PMAs are certified for **sacraments** only at the church/parish to which they have been assigned. This authorization allows them to preside at sacraments off the church property as long as it is a ministry function of that congregation/parish.

#### **TRANSITION TIME**

- When it becomes known that the PMA's assignment is ending, work with the PMA on their transition back to serving in partnership with the pastor instead of functioning in the place of an ordained pastor. This can be a time of grief and discernment in a PMA's life.
- Remind the PMA to **select a mentor** before their assignment ends since she/he will no longer have a supervisor. The PMA must report their new mentor to the PMA Office as soon as the relationship is confirmed.

*Continue to the next page.*

*Sign and date the Declaration, and send it to the PMA Office.*

**Declaration of Acceptance of the PMA Mentor & Supervisor Handbook,**  
revised January 2021

We have read the January 2021 version of the Certified Parish Ministry Associate’s Handbook and will abide by its guidelines while involved with the PMA Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name (printed) of PMA*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name (printed) of Mentor or Supervisor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of PMA*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Mentor or Supervisor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date signed*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date signed*

After signing and dating this last page of your PMA Mentor & Supervisor Handbook, send this page to the PMA Office to be placed in the PMA’s personal file.

Send to:

PMA Administrator  
Nebraska Synod, ELCA  
PO Box 1462  
North Platte, NE 69103-1462

[pma@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:pma@nebraskasynod.org)