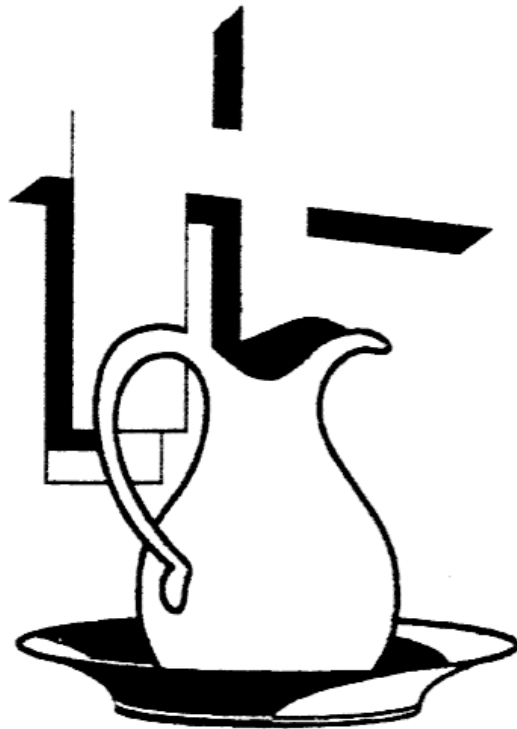


MENTOR & SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK



Parish Ministry Associate Program

Nebraska Synod, ELCA

July 2024

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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 congregation 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, but is not assigned by the bishop to serve a congregation or ministry setting.

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

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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 ¹	X		X			July 1
Unassigned	X		X			July 1
On Staff		X ²		X	X	July 1
Assigned		X		X	X	July 1

¹ A student serving on a congregation's staff will follow the On Staff reporting pattern.

² 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 “God Calling to Me To” tab. Then click on “Parish Ministry Associate Program” to access the documents.

PMA PROGRAM STAFF & OFFICE

PMA ADMINISTRATOR pma@nebraskasynod.org

PMA OFFICE: Nebraska Synod ELCA, 6757 Newport Ave. Suite #200, Omaha NE. 68152

OFFICE PHONE: 402-896-5311

The PMA Administrator position is a part-time position at the Synod office. Email is one of the quickest means to contact the Administrator. If there is no response immediately, when the Administrator is back in the office, she/he will respond as soon as possible.

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 or Administrator for confidential consideration.

- The mentoring pastor shall **review and understand the PMA Student Handbook and the Mentor and Supervisor Handbook**. With the student, **fill out the [PMA Mentor and Supervisor- New Student Handbook Google Form](#)**.

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, required for any course.
- **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 [PMA Mentor/Supervisor Annual Report](#)** is submitted to the PMA Office by July 1. ([Church Council Annual Report](#) for Authorized PMA Students)
- Make sure the student has read and understood *Definition and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*, available at 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), Liturgical Towel Set, 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 PMA Mentor/Supervisor Annual Evaluation Google Form by July 1.** 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 July 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 August 1, with a decision on renewal by August 31, and certification valid until the following June 30. A \$25 late fee is required. After August 1, PMA certification is revoked. Applications for reinstatement are due the following July 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 and **confirm acknowledgement on the [PMA Mentor and Supervisor Report](#) Google Form.**

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 an ID card signed by the bishop identifying the PMA as authorized for these ministries from the PMA Office.**
- 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 professional 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 to officiate at weddings.
- PMAs will not wear **clerical attire** (i.e. clerical collars, clergy or diaconal stoles) and will not use the title **Pastor, Deacon, or Vicar**. It is appropriate for the PMA's title and name to be presented as: PMA Pat Smith or Pat Smith, PMA.
- 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 the acknowledgement page of the Certified (or Student, if applicable) PMA Handbook** and the **Mentor & Supervisor Handbook to the PMA Office**.
- The PMA must apply for **renewal of certification** by July 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 August 1, with a decision on renewal by August 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 July 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 July 1**. Available on the Synod Website.

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 an ID card signed by the bishop identifying the PMA as authorized for ministry from the PMA Office.**
- 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 to officiate at weddings.
- PMAs are not to offer any counseling as part of their ministries unless they hold the appropriate professional 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**. It is appropriate for the PMA's title and name to be presented as: PMA Pat Smith or Pat Smith, PMA.
- Assigned PMAs are certified for **sacraments** only at the church/parish to which they have been assigned. This authorization from the Bishop 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.

Handbook Acceptance

- Please verify that you have read through the Handbook with your PMA/PMA Student. This is located on the Google form for [PMA Mentor/Supervisor Report](#) or the [PMA Mentor/Supervisor-New Student Handbook](#).