
SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



CONTEXTUAL
EDUCATION

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LEARNING
BY DOING

BECOMING
BY BEING

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ALL MATERIAL IN THIS HANDBOOK MAY BE DUPLICATED AND

DISTRIBUTED AS NEEDED THROUGHOUT THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE.



WELCOME

BY REV. STACEY NALEAN-CARLSON
DIRECTOR OF CONTEXTUAL EDUCATION

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Thanks be to God for empowering us all with the gifts of the Holy Spirit! What a joy it is to partner with you for the sake of sharing God's steadfast & abiding love with a world in need of good news!

At Wartburg we are dedicated to forming servant leaders who embody the gospel & respond to God's call with faithfulness, collegiality & innovation. An essential part of this formation is the internship experience. Students learn not only how to do the tasks of ministry, but how to embody the office of ministry to which they are being called.

We give thanks to God for our students & for all those who accompany them throughout their internship--supervisors, mentors, lay internship committee members & the ministry sites themselves. Your commitment to teaching & learning together is deeply valued & beautiful to behold!

This handbook is intended to accompany the Internship Handbook, serving as a resource specifically for supervisors. All material may be duplicated & distributed as needed. We are grateful for the wisdom that is shared among the ELCA seminaries in preparing this material.

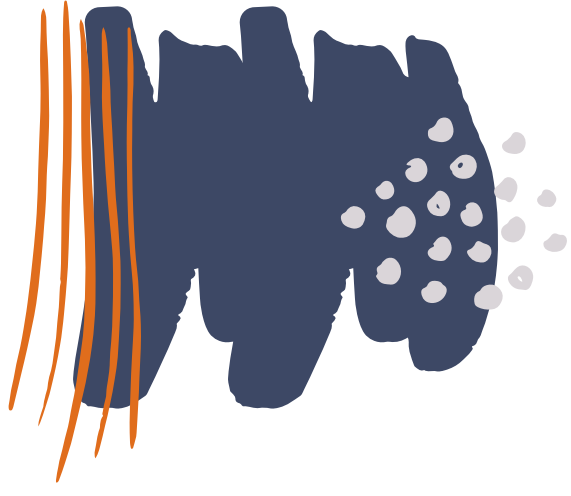
Because each pathway through seminary is unique, you may find that some information doesn't apply directly to your situation. If you have specific questions or concerns, please be in touch. I am also a resource for you, here to support & encourage you. I welcome conversations with you along the way, especially if there are particular joys you wish to share or particular challenges with which you need assistance. We do this important work together, one in the body of Christ. We weep together & we rejoice together.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy & peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

Peace, 

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Wartburg Theological Seminary Mission Statement

Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning.

The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.

Embodying Wartburg Seminary's Mission Statement

Wartburg Seminary's core curriculum centers on the formation of leaders who demonstrate the Twelve Pastoral-Diaconal Practices for the life and mission of the church. The twelve practices have guided the faculty through ongoing curriculum innovations.

"We undertake continual assessment of our curriculum in partnership with synods to monitor the emerging developments in the church and world and make revisions that meet the needs of engaged, compassionate, and wise leaders for the 21st Century church. These practices cultivate a distinctive set of highly relational leadership qualities."

– Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson, Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics
The William D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church

Twelve Pastoral-Diaconal Practices

The Outcomes and Expectations of Wartburg

Practice of Being Rooted in the Gospel:

Articulates the Gospel in a way that is heard as Gospel. Is publicly Lutheran and Gospel-centered.

Practice of Missio Dei in Word and Sacrament:

Is grounded in Word and Sacrament as the means by which God creates and forms community (koinonia) for God's mission (diakonia) in the world. Exercises faithful worship preparation and evangelical preaching.

Practice of Biblical and Theological Wisdom: Interprets reality theologically and biblically as a habit. Has a core set of theological concepts that are interpreted with flexibility in different contexts.

Practice of Ecclesial Partnership:

Displays a healthy sense of connectedness with the whole church. Fosters partnership with the ELCA and ecumenical openness.

Practice of Complex Analysis:

Demonstrates capacity to carefully examine complex social, economic, scientific, and religious issues without oversimplification. Sees relationships from a systems perspective, remaining non-anxious in the face of ambiguity.

Practice of Curiosity:

Is fundamentally curious, employing creativity in the use of language. Is open to grow beyond current perspectives and willing to pursue learning with intellectual depth.

Practice of Pastoral Concern:

Loves God's people with a "pastor's heart," demonstrating a generous spirit in relating to others. Maintains a clear sense of pastoral identity and a desire for excellence in pastoral ministry.

Practice of Personal Faith and Integrity:

Lives as a person of faith, grounded in a life of prayer and study. Is self-aware in seeing the larger picture, proclaiming hope, and setting healthy boundaries.

Practice of Collegiality:

Leads in a way that is responsive to the situation and promotes team building. Creates collegial groups within and beyond the church for promoting many forms of ministry.

Practice of Evangelical Listening and Speaking the Faith to Others:

Listens in a way that leads people to deeper faith questions. Engages in thoughtful witness to the Christian message, especially to youth and those outside the faith.

Practice of Immersion in the Context:

Shows awareness of the context through listening to, dialogue with and involvement in the local community. Has ability to interpret texts and contexts with insight.

Practice of Engagement with Cross-Cultural and Global Dimensions:

Is sensitive to multicultural issues and religious pluralism in the context of globalization. Understands the inclusive character of the Christian Gospel.



Wartburg
THEOLOGICA

The Purpose of Internship

The purpose of internship is for students to develop their pastoral/diaconal skills and pastoral/diaconal imagination through an experience of practicing ministry and reflecting upon that experience. It is an action-reflection style of learning. Interns grow in their pastoral/diaconal identity, spiritual development, theological reflection, practical skills, emotional maturity, stewardship leadership, and missional leadership. To this end, the internship focuses on essential competencies:

1. Leadership. Consider your leadership in serving God's mission in the world (for example: through the congregation, in partnership with the ELCA - including synods and churchwide - and with ecumenical partners)
2. Theological Articulation. Consider your ability to speak clearly and with insight about the Christian faith from a Lutheran perspective.
3. Leading Worship. Consider your poise and presence, voice and language as you read scripture, lead prayer and conduct liturgy.
4. Preaching. Consider biblical interpretation, connection to the congregation/community, use of illustrations and organizational clarity, as well as delivery of sermons.
5. Teaching Adults. Consider teaching methods including the ability to facilitate discussion and create a comfortable learning environment as well as the quality, depth and presentation of concepts.
6. Teaching Youth and Children. Consider both material and presentation for various age groups.
7. Evangelism. Consider the ability to welcome and interact with strangers as well as offering a witness to Jesus Christ.
8. Pastoral Care. Consider the ability to develop trusting relationships, listen empathetically, respond to crisis and grief situations, discern the needs of people and respect confidential information.
9. Administration. Consider your ability to work with committees, deal with change and conflict, respond constructively to criticism and accomplish tasks in a timely manner.
10. Stewardship Leader. Consider your ability to articulate and model Christian stewardship of life, talents and money in pastoral leadership and personal life.
11. Leadership of Social Ministry. Consider your sensitivity to issues of need and justice in the community and your ability to empower others to respond out of their faith commitment.
12. Social Justice: Consider your ability to speak and act publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, call for justice and peace, and proclaim God's love for the world.
13. Equipping Others: Consider your demonstrated capacity to mobilize people of faith with different gifts and perspectives that can enrich the church's witness in the world.
14. Consider your ability to witness to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and globally and empowering others to do the same.

The Role of the Supervisor

During Internship, the supervisor and internship site are viewed as extensions of the seminary faculty in this important dimension of theological education. Regular weekly scheduled supervisory meetings are important to the internship experience. Interns and supervisors can meet in person, via video conference, or by phone. As a primary accompaniment partner, the supervisor, with the intern, focuses on the intern's personal, professional, and theological development and formation as a Rostered Leader.

Understandings and Commitments

- The Supervisor/Intern relationship
 - Exercises a posture of generosity
 - Employs an attitude of goodwill
 - Embodies a posture of openness
 - Is mindful of the impact of language
 - Is attentive to the effect of power
 - Is rooted and grounded in trust
- The supervisor helps the intern start strong, attending to on-boarding essentials, community orientation, and essential ministry information
- The supervisor assumes responsibility for introducing the intern to staff, lay leadership, key volunteers, key community people, congregational story-keepers, text study groups, and ecumenical colleagues
- The supervisor works with the intern to develop a Learning Service Agreement/Covenant, plan toward its completion, and evaluate progress
- The supervisor assumes responsibility for weekly supervision conversations that through an action/reflection style of conversation, focus on two critical formation questions:
 - What am I learning by doing?
 - Who am I becoming by being?
 - If the Intern has a mentor, the mentor will also focus on this question
- These conversations:
 - Affirm gifts for ministry
 - Assess particular experiences
 - Constructively critique the intern's work
 - Identify growing edges
 - Plan for next steps
- The supervisor advises and shepherds the formation of the Lay Internship Committee / Ministry Site Committee and serves as a resource person; the supervisor does not regularly attend meetings of the committee
- The supervisor serves as an advocate for and interpreter of teaching and learning ministry to the congregation/agency
- The supervisor provides site leadership with the financial expectations for the internship
- The supervisor practices healthy boundaries

- The supervisor maintains open communication between the intern and the seminary
- The supervisor participates in training opportunities offered by Wartburg Theological Seminary
- The supervisor participates in at least two Internship Cluster Gatherings with the intern
- The supervisor participates in any site visits conducted by WTS
- The supervisor completes all required evaluations. Due dates for evaluations should be shared with the supervisor by the intern. It is the supervisor's responsibility to meet these due dates without the intern being put in the awkward position of reminding their supervisor to complete the evaluations. Once completed, the supervisor needs to give the completed evaluation to the intern. The intern is responsible for submitting the evaluations to Wartburg and to their synod.

Characteristics and Attributes of a Successful Teaching and Learning Supervisor

- Understands and embraces call to teaching and learning ministry
- Understands contextual learning and interprets that to the congregation/agency
- Is secure in their own diaconal/pastoral identity
- Embraces the call to guide the formation of who God is calling the intern to be; does not seek to mold the intern in their own image
- Provides the intern space to learn and grow
- Trusts the formation process
- Has hard conversations when necessary to help the intern grow
- Embodies grace and models forgiveness
- Demonstrates and builds trust
- Is adaptable, flexible, and comfortable with change
- Creates space for the intern to fail
- Celebrates the milestones of the intern
- Has a clear understanding of congregational systems
- Is patient
- Is fundamentally self-aware

Supervisory Sessions

Internship supervisors will typically be ordained Lutheran pastors or deacons with at least three years of pastoral or diaconal experience. As models for future Rostered Leaders, they play a critical role in the Intern's growth and formation.

The relationship should not become that of a counselor-counseled. It is difficult to keep a useful balance between the roles of supervisor and counselor. If the intern needs professional counseling, this needs to be arranged with a professional other than the supervisor.

Supervisors are expected to actively participate in training sessions prior to each internship and participate in cluster gatherings during the year with other supervisors and Interns in their region.

The focus and character of the Supervisory Sessions are different than management or planning meetings that focus on parish plans and goals. Supervisory Sessions focus on the Intern's personal, professional, and theological development and formation as a Rostered Leader. These sessions provide the opportunity to affirm gifts for ministry, assess particular experiences and critique areas where further growth is indicated.

The Intern will set much of the agenda in these sessions. Reporting on experiences, offering self-critique, raising questions, exploring ideas, and addressing pastoral/diaconal/professional growth in ministry. The supervisor has the responsibility to help the session to be as useful as possible for the Intern. Active listening on the part of the supervisor is essential.

- Focus supervisory conversations on two pivotal questions:
 - What am I learning by doing?
 - Who am I becoming by being?
- Maintain a regular weekly schedule with both parties giving top priority to the sessions. For Interns serving in detached sites, Supervision can be in-person, via video conference (such as zoom) or a combination of both. Consider noting it on the church calendar so congregational members know not to contact you during the session.
- Find a quiet and neutral place to meet, devoid of interruptions (especially phone calls, email, and other digital distractions).
- Consider beginning with scripture/devotional reading and prayer and alternating the leading of this time.
- Expect the Intern to bear a large share of responsibility for the focus and direction of the meeting.
- Be a creative, intensive, empathetic listener. Overall, the Intern will do more talking than the supervisor.
- Ask questions which stimulate, challenge, and clarify without dominating the reflective process. The supervisor seeks to maintain focus on the development of the Intern as a pastor or deacon. A key task will be to identify and articulate issues which impede the performance of effective ministry.

- Invite theological reflection on God's role in the Intern's life and in the ministry of the congregation.
- At the conclusion, take time to summarize the conclusions and evaluate the session. In order for the quality of the reflection to remain focused, intentional evaluation for the supervisory session itself should take place regularly. On these occasions, the supervisor will want to take the initiative in requesting feedback regarding the helpfulness of the Supervisory Sessions and consider constructive suggestions from the Intern.

Possible Topics for Conversation

- One's call to ministry
- The pastor or deacon as resident theologian
- Incorporating study into the weekly routine
- Prayer and the spiritual life
- Areas of competency addressed on the internship evaluations
- Sermon preparation (including exegesis) and preaching
- Ecumenism
- The pastor or deacon as person (Sabbath rest & wholistic wellness)

Resource for Discussion:

The "Three Minute Ministry Mentor" available at this [link](#) may provide excellent fodder for guided discussions, especially about embodying diaconal/pastoral imagination. Student & supervisor might view an episode's video together and then engage in conversation.

Interns have access to a wide variety of helpful resources, handbooks, templates, links, suggested reading materials, etc. through their Castle Commons Internship Page. You are encouraged to review the available resources with your Intern.

Remuneration

Wartburg Theological Seminary is grateful for deacons and pastors who embrace the call to serve as internship supervisors as a part of their own call to rostered ministry. WTS does not require financial compensation for supervisors. However, we strongly encourage remuneration for detached supervisors, recognizing the significant time, spiritual, and emotional commitment that a supervisor makes to an intern for the sake of the church. A sample letter of agreement is provided on page 9.

WTS Internship Guiding Questions

1. The two fundamental questions that guide the intern's formation during the internship are:

- What am I learning by doing?
- Who am I becoming by being?

2. In ongoing supervision, you will reflect with your intern on various elements and dimensions of your intern's learning by doing. As you consider specific experiences (a sermon, teaching confirmation, presiding at funerals, etc.) you will help the intern reflect upon what they are learning in each of the following elements and dimensions:

Elements:

ministry
myself
this site
these people
this community
the Church, the Gospel
God

Dimensions:

practical,
contextual
theological
biblical
ecclesiological
personal

For example, your intern has regularly visited at the nursing home. With the intern, you will discuss what they are learning by doing this visitation - what they are learning about ministry, themselves, your site (context), your people, your community, the Church, the Gospel, God, that is practical, contextual, theological, biblical, ecclesiological, and personal.

During supervision:

a. Choose a particular task or experience in ministry (i.e. preaching, worship leadership, teaching confirmation, visitation, teaching adults, etc.).

b. Choose 1 element from the list above.

c. Share with each other what you have learned about that element through each of the dimensions listed above.

d. For example: What have I learned about ministry (element) by preaching (task/experience) that is practical, contextual, theological, biblical, ecclesiological, and personal.

**Wartburg Theological Seminary Supervisory Session
Critical Incident Reflection
(a sample form you may choose to use as you wish)**

Date:

Description of Experience:

Interpersonal Dynamics:

Operative Theology:

Self-Evaluation:

Further Action:

Internship Supervision FAQs

1. When should the internship begin?

Once internship assignments are made, the intern, supervisor, and congregational leadership collaboratively determine a start date. An internship typically cannot begin until after a student is endorsed.

2. What contact should I have with the intern prior to the beginning of internship?

You should have introductory conversations following assignment. It is important to remember that “the internship does not begin until it begins.” Contact or conversations prior to the start of internship should be limited and should only pertain to necessary information regarding the logistics of relocation (if applicable) and beginning.

3. How does the Internship or Ministry Site Committee get formed?

The supervising pastor, in collaboration with the ministry site leadership, typically forms the committee. Once an intern begins to get to know the site, the intern often is invited to add one or two members of their choosing to the committee.

4. Does the supervisor meet with the Internship Committee?

The supervisor meets with the committee in an initial conversation to instruct them in their work. The supervisor does not meet with the committee on an ongoing basis, but is available as a resource to the committee.

5. Is it appropriate to read and discuss a book with the intern as a part of supervision?

Supervisors and interns often read and discuss texts together, especially those that are relevant to formation. When this is done, typically an intern suggests at least one shared reading, and a supervisor suggests at least one shared reading.

6. Is an internship project required as a part of the internship?

Interns are welcome to complete a project; however, an internship project is not required. Instead, interns are asked to think holistically about their internship experience, engaging in cross-competency ministry whenever possible. If an intern chooses to complete an internship project, it should be identified in the Learning Service Agreement or Covenant.

7. Where can I find the evaluations?

All evaluations are available on the Candidacy page of the ELCA website.

8. How are evaluations submitted?

It is the intern’s responsibility to submit all completed and signed evaluations via the Castle Commons Internship site by the required due date.

9. What contact will we have with the seminary during internship?

All documents submitted by the intern are carefully read. Should anything be noted in those documents that requires our attention, a Contextual Education staff person will be in touch to arrange a conversation. Every intern and site can expect a virtual site visit near the mid-point of their internship. The intern will receive the virtual site visit information at the start of the internship. Should a particular need arise, you are always welcome to reach out with questions and concerns.

10. How should we deal with conflict during the internship?

- Foster and model healthy resolution
- Practice Matthew 18
- Go to the source
- Focus on behaviors, not personalities
- Practice Generosity

11. What is unique about supervision conversations?

The supervisor/intern relationship is unique and critical. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Posture of Generosity
- Attitude of Goodwill
- Openness
- Language
- Power
- Trust

12. How should we think about supervision?

Supervision is essential and regular. Ideally, supervision conversations are weekly, hour-long conversations. These conversations should be held as sacred time to lean into the intern's formation.

The content and nature of supervision should focus on the intern's development as a Rostered Leader. Both the intern and the supervisor should approach this time with a prayerful and devotional posture. Each conversation should have an agenda in advance, but should leave room for spontaneous conversation. The intern's Learning Service Agreement should be central to supervision conversations. Over-arching themes of supervision should be the intern's development of pastoral/diaconal identity and pastoral/diaconal imagination.

Because supervision should be both supportive and evaluative, the supervisor should be mindful of five primary tasks:

- Affirm the intern's gifts for ministry
- Assess particular internship experiences
- Constructively critique the intern's work and progress
- Identify growing edges
- Plan for what is ahead in the internship

Supervision conversations should look back on the intern's completed experiences and look forward to what lies ahead. To this end, supervision should seek to foster awareness and growth in scaffolded conversations that integrate learning, experience, and reflection. Supervision should assist the intern in planning for what is upcoming while applying what has already been learned.

13. Who plans supervision conversations?

The intern sets the agenda for both supervisory sessions and internship/ministry site committee meetings. Agendas should be planned in collaboration, correspondingly, with the supervisor and the chair of the committee.

Best Practices for Supervisors
(shared by supervisors in attendance at the 2022 Internship Conference)

- Let the intern guide the process
- Become comfortable with silence, giving the intern space to process things
- Give one hour of undivided attention to the intern each week
- Focus on the “why” behind what we do as deacons/pastors rather than the “how”
- Help interns find experiences outside of the site context during internship (organizations to volunteer with, pulpit supply, etc.)
- Be flexible in honoring the different passions, gifts, experiences & backgrounds that each intern brings to your site
- Be transparent in evaluating the intern so there are no surprises in what they hear from different committees or read on evaluation forms about your perceptions of their work
- Remember that interns are students first. Focus on forming good boundaries around school, work & life. At the same time, be mindful in reading the needs of your site & understanding/managing their expectations of the intern
- Give the intern the freedom to try new things & fail
- Set clear expectations about what time in internship looks like & the intern’s role. Remember that your pace & work style & that of the intern may be different from each other
- Introduce the intern to local funeral directors & help the intern get on their lists for conducting community funerals
- Be willing to explain why your site does something one way rather than another way. Don’t assume the intern “just knows,” especially if they are coming to you from a different denomination or background than your site/community are familiar with. You may need to explain things in more detail than you anticipated
- Help the intern start well. Introduce the site to the intern (members, history, setting, the surrounding community, etc.)
- Step out of the way, so the intern can lead & explore leadership
- Be available & accessible to the intern to provide support
- Encourage the intern to pursue hobbies, ways of life outside of church & finding balance

- Focus on formation rather than just providing the intern a “to-do” list
- Rotate groups of lay members who provide sermon feedback throughout the internship to allow the intern to hear from more voices (beyond the supervisor & internship committee) & to encourage greater participation in the teaching/learning process among lay members

Resources Shared by Participants During the 2024 Internship Conference

- 1) Explore the Enneagram
- 2) www.canva.com
- 3) <https://www.dianeharpsterart.com/purchase/solovedcarddeck>
- 4) <https://thekingcenter.org/nonviolence365-training/>
- 5) The Wake Up (Michelle MiJung Kim)
- 6) Read through the entirety of the Bible during internship
- 7) What Do They Hear (Powell)
- 8) This Odd and Wondrous Calling (Daniel and Copenhaver)
- 9) Generation to Generation (Friedman)
- 10) Richard Rohr and the Center for Action and Contemplation’s daily e-devotions
- 11) Circle of Grace (Jan Richardson)
- 12) The Great Divorce (CS Lewis)
- 13) From Wild Man to Wise Man (Richard Rohr)
- 14) <https://www.workingpreacher.org/>
- 15) A Human Being Died That Night (Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela)
- 16) Ground Up Grace Daily Texts & Forgivin’ Livin’ (<https://groundupgrace.com/>)
- 17) Clergy closet exchange facebook page for those looking for albs for the cost of shipping
- 18) The Gottman Institute (<https://www.gottman.com/blog/softening-startup/>)
- 19) Leadership Freak (<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2023/07/31/curiosity-5-powerful-questions-you-can-ask-today/>)

Some More Suggested Readings

1. "Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts," by Brene Brown
2. "She: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry," by Karoline Lewis
3. "Incarnate Leadership: 5 Leadership Lessons from the Life of Jesus," by Bill Robinson
4. "Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory," by Tod Bolsinger
5. "Mentoring: Biblical, Theological and Practical Perspectives," ed. by Dean K. Thompson and D. Cameron Murchison, et al
6. "Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S." by Lenny Duncan
7. "The Cross and the Lynching Tree," by James H. Cone
8. "The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World," by Deanna A. Thompson
9. "When Leadership and Spiritual Direction Meet: Stories and Reflections for Congregational Life," by Gil W. Stafford"
10. "Ordinary Grace," by William Kent Krueger
11. "The Pastor: A Memoir," by Eugene H. Peterson
12. "An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith," by Barbara Brown Taylor
13. "Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the Culture of Now," by Walter Brueggemann

SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT

between (Name of Off Site Internship Supervisor)
Supervising Pastor/Deacon for Intern (Name of Student) &
(Name of Ministry Site) of (city, state)

beginning (date) and ending (date)

As Supervisor, Deacon/Pastor _____ has the following responsibilities:

- A. Shepherding the student's work and assisting the student in living into the answer to the question, "What do I do?" Therefore, the Supervisor shepherds day-to-day work responsibilities and dealing with the various challenges of ministry.
- B. Meeting regularly with the student for supervisory conversations.
- C. Evaluating the student's progress toward ministry competencies and completing written evaluations needed by both Wartburg Theological Seminary and the _____ Synod.
- D. The Supervisor will be available to serve in this capacity for a maximum of 10 hours per month, including travel, at the cost of \$30 per hour. Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate.
- E. Such supervision may include face-to-face meetings with the student; periodically attending worship to observe worship leadership and sermon presentation; attending a council meeting or Ministry Site Committee meeting upon specific request; phone or electronic meetings with Vicar ____, the Seminary, or the Candidacy Committee; etc.
- F. Pastor/Deacon _____ will provide the ministry site a monthly report for reimbursement, noting miles driven and hours in supervisory work.
- G. This agreement will be reviewed before it can be renewed.

Ministry Site President _____ **Date** _____

Supervisor _____ **Date** _____