

17. MENTORING POLICY FOR INCOMING CLERGY

Presbytery of St. Augustine

The Presbytery of St. Augustine uses mentors as a way of welcoming, introducing, and orienting new clergy to the life and work of the presbytery. It is meant to supplement the New Ministers' Orientation event led by the presbytery staff.

Mentors are fellow clergy who are experienced members of the presbytery, familiar with its staff, procedures, policies, and resources. They are persons willing and able to share their wisdom and information with newcomers in ways that are supportive and constructive to a new member. They are also persons who are friendly, outgoing, and ready to be helpful to a new colleague. Mentors are selected and appointed by the Member Preparation and Call Commission at the time of the reception of an incoming new member.

The mentoring relationship is expected to last at least six months in the case of experienced incoming ministers, and one year in the case of first-call ministers.

Mentoring consists of the following tasks:

1. Welcoming – The mentor is expected to find ways to welcome the incoming minister into the fellowship of the presbytery. Such ways may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Calling the new minister within 7 days of being asked to serve as a mentor
- b. Making appointments for lunch or dinner and conversation; it is especially welcoming to include the incoming minister's spouse in some of these invitations
- c. Arranging to share transportation to and/or sitting next to the incoming minister at the next meeting of presbytery, and introducing him/her to others at the meeting
- d. Writing a short note to the incoming minister, expressing welcome
- e. Checking in with the incoming minister periodically to see if there are questions or concerns

2. Shared Study and Resources – Particularly in the case of first-call clergy, the mentor can help continue the learning process of theological education by selecting a recent book on the practice of ministry for shared study and conversation. The presbytery resource center maintains a large collection of such works, and the Alban Institute provides a significant bibliography of excellent works in this area. Presbytery will provide up to \$50.00 per mentor/incoming minister pair in support of book purchases.

Mentors may also find it helpful to introduce the incoming minister to prayer groups or lectionary study groups of which the mentor is part.

At the very least, the mentor should make opportunities to discuss the ministry context of the incoming minister, and to suggest such resources from the presbytery as may be helpful.

3. Encouragement – The early months of a new parish are at once the most exciting and the most daunting. One of the primary functions of the mentor is to offer a listening ear, patient encouragement, and reliable support to the incoming minister.

If the mentor detects issues of larger concern, such as mental health concerns, conflict in the church, or family adjustment concerns, the mentor should ask the permission of the incoming minister to share these concerns with presbytery staff, or should encourage the incoming minister to share them with staff directly.

4. Reporting – The mentor is expected to make two reports to the Member Preparation and Call Commission during the mentoring period, indicating what activities were shared with the incoming minister, and sharing any concerns the mentor has. Reports to the Member Preparation and Call Commission will ordinarily remain confidential within the committee.

Adopted 10 July 2004
Amended 1 January 2018
