



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

The Mid-Atlantic Parish Training Program

A program of the Committee on Priesthood, part of the Commission on Ministry



Guidebook

Mid-Atlantic Director:

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The Purpose of Mid-Atlantic

The purpose of the Mid-Atlantic Parish Training Program is **to help shape and form future priests for day-to-day ministry in a faith community, whether that is in a parish or another community.** Mid-Atlantic seeks to make certain that every priest ordained in the Diocese of Virginia has worked full-time in a parish before ordination.

Mid-Atlantic does this by Immersing interns into the day-to-day culture of a congregation's life and preparing them to enter into a faith community as an ordained leader, providing learning opportunities through mentoring and collegial relationships.

Need-to-Know

- **Who:** All postulants/candidates for the priesthood in the Diocese of Virginia are expected to participate in Mid-Atlantic.
- **When:** For M.Div. students, Mid-Atlantic is usually the summer between middler and junior year. For Anglican Studies students, Mid-Atlantic is usually the summer before they begin their Anglican year.
- **Time Commitment & Stipend:** Interns serve 40 hours per week for eight weeks. They receive a \$3000 honorarium: \$1500 paid by the Bishop's office, \$1500 paid by the parish (the bishop's office pays their portion to the parish, which in turn pays the intern). There is some need-based flexibility to the timing of the internship and the parish's contribution to the honorarium.
- **Colloquy:** During their Mid-Atlantic summer, interns attend four facilitated colloquy sessions. Sessions are typically 2-3 hours and held in a central location.

Mid-Atlantic Forms

Can be found on the [Mid-Atlantic webpage](#)

- Letter of Intent Template
- Guide: Intern Reflection
- Guide: Clergy Mentor Reflection
- Guide: Lay Committee Reflection
- Stipend Request Template

Full-Time Immersion into the Day-to-Day Culture of a Congregation's Life

Rationale

Full-time immersion in the day-to-day culture of congregational life supplements seminary studies, Field Education, and Clinical Pastoral Experience (CPE) by providing each intern with a unique opportunity to experience parish ministry while on the path to the priesthood. Because interns come to this moment with different experiences, strengths, interests, skills and needs, Mid-Atlantic is designed to be flexible.

Interns, working in concert with the canon's office, the Committee on Priesthood, the Mid-Atlantic Director, and the Priest Mentor, design a summer experience tailored to take advantage of their unique gifts, sense of calling, challenges, and opportunities. The intern will learn about the history and context of the congregation from the perspective of a priest, reflecting on what strengths, challenges, conflicts, periods of growth and other factors indicate about the pastoral needs of that parish.

Selecting a Mid-Atlantic Site

Typically, Transition Ministers meet with seminarians in Sept. or Oct. to discuss placement opportunities with each middler. Based on those conversations, the Mid-Atlantic director receives a list of possible placements, and reaches out to the would-be Priest Mentors about their willingness to serve as such. Eligible interns receive an e-mail providing the names of the parishes where he or she should interview.

These options are carefully considered in order to immerse each Intern in a parish setting which will provide them with

- A learning experience which will broaden their experience of parish ministry.
- A skilled Priest Mentor to assist in the intern's formation.
- Experience in the field of ministry to which the intern feels called.
 - **Note:** That field of ministry may not be parish ministry for every intern. Mid-Atlantic is willing to consider non-traditional placements such as camp chaplaincies. Interns considering applying for a non-traditional placement should be in touch with the Mid-Atlantic Director; there is a separate application for non-traditional placements.

After the intern receives the approved list of parishes, he or she should arrange interviews with each Priest Mentor who is listed in the e-mail. The interviews should be completed by February 15, or by a later date designated by the Mid-Atlantic Director, if necessary.

If the Priest Mentor at one or more of the parishes offers the internship, the intern decides which parish most fits her sense of call or need for learning. If none do, the intern may discuss other placement opportunities with the Mid-Atlantic Director and Ed Keithly, Vocational Development Minister. In rare circumstances it may be necessary for the Mid-Atlantic Director to direct an intern to serve at a particular parish, but every effort will be made to allow participants to make their own decisions, within the parameters of the program requirements. The Mid-Atlantic Director and Ed Keithly should be consulted with any questions about site suitability or for assistance in reflecting on which site might be the best choice.

Site selection is formalized by the completion of the Letter of Intent.

The Letter of Intent

The letter assures that all parties have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for the Mid-Atlantic internship. Each intern should keep the Mid-Atlantic Director informed about the interviewing progress and site selection. Periodic email updates are very helpful. When all of the information is complete and signatures have been obtained, a signed copy of the Letter of Intent should be e-mailed to the Mid-Atlantic Director.

Start Date & Duration

In a typical summer internship, the Mid-Atlantic experience lasts for eight weeks, and can take place any time between May 15 and August 30. The exact starting and ending dates are decided by agreement between the Intern and Priest Mentor. These dates will need to mesh with Mid-Atlantic mentoring groups that will be established during the summer (more about mentoring groups in the next section).

Stipend

Interns will receive a stipend for their participation in the Mid-Atlantic. The bishop and the site each provide one half of the stipend. Once the parish sends the stipend request letter (template on Mid-Atlantic [webpage](#)), the bishop's office will send a check to the parish. Interns are then paid on the same schedule as other parish staff, and paid as employees (W-2), not self-employed contractors (1099).

Elements of Immersion

While each Priest Mentor and Intern will design a somewhat unique plan for the internship, several elements of the immersion experience are essential:

Apprenticeship: It is expected that the Intern will spend a considerable amount of time simply being with the Priest Mentor to observe how she/he serves as a priest. The Priest Mentor should involve the Intern in as wide a range of activities and ministries as possible. If the Priest Mentor is involved in counseling, it is appropriate for him or her to ask if the person being counseled would mind having an intern sit in on the conversation. Many people are willing to agree to such an arrangement if they know that it will help to form a person who is on the path to ordained ministry.

Preaching & Liturgical Leadership: It is expected that the Intern will be fully immersed in the congregation's worship life. Each Intern should preach at least twice during the summer—more than twice is encouraged. Each Intern should be given maximum opportunity to officiate at the Daily Office and/or provide leadership at the Celebration of Holy Eucharist (as the canons and rubrics allow). Interns should assist in weddings and burials. Participating in worship planning and preparation is also essential.

Pastoral Care: Interns should be engaged in as much as the timeframe allows in the congregation's pastoral ministry. Visits may be done with the Priest Mentor if necessary, but it is desirable that by the end of the summer the intern should have performed one or more pastoral functions (visits to a homebound parishioner, nursing home services, etc.) on his or her own.

Administration: The Intern should come to understand the administrative functions which are necessary to the life of the congregation. Attendance at staff meetings, planning sessions, and Vestry meetings are essential. Interns should contribute to the preparation of the Sunday bulletin and monthly newsletter. Time should be spent becoming familiar with congregational record keeping for worship services, stewardship, audits, parochial reports, etc.

The Major Project: Each Intern will engage in a major ministry project. This project should be something which the intern feels called to do and for which the parish has a need. Ideally, it should include significant partnership and interaction with lay members of the congregation. The project may be initiated by the Intern and come to a conclusion at the end of the Mid-Atlantic or it may ask the Intern to work with an on-going congregational ministry. Some examples of Major Projects include:

- Organizing and leading a short-term mission trip.
- Organizing and leading a Vacation Bible School or similar event.
- Working with the parish evangelism committee to design and implement a new member incorporation program.
- Organizing a theologically-centered summer book study group.
- Leading a weekly sermon discussion group (all sermons would be discussed, not just the Intern's).
- Taking on a major organizational/leadership role in the congregation's outreach ministry.
- Leading a Christian Education team in the planning and presentation of a Christian Ed teacher training event.
- Writing a Christian Ed program that would take place during the Christian Ed year.

Major Projects must be well thought out, carefully articulated, and approved by the Priest Mentor before the Mid-Atlantic experience begins. They should be described in the Summer Covenant. They must also be documentable in some way (e.g., in the case of a program which the Intern led, by the program plan; or in the case of a mission trip, by photos and a brief report published in the parish's newsletter).

The Creation of Mentoring Relationships

Rationale

Mentoring relationships are essential to the ongoing formation of a priestly identity. This is just as true for those who are ordained as it is for those in formation. Mentoring relationships for priests take the form of one-on-one relationships with another priest, a spiritual director (lay or ordained), and/or a group of committed clergy who meet regularly. Each intern will have a mentoring relationship with a priest at the Mid-Atlantic parish. This priest is referred to as the “Priest Mentor.”

The Priest Mentor will ask for five to seven lay volunteers at the parish to form a Lay Mentoring Committee for the Intern (five committee members is recommended). This mentoring group will meet at least four times with the Intern over the course of the eight-week program. In addition, Interns will meet together in a colloquy group for collegial learning.

Priest Mentor

- The Intern will meet weekly with the Priest Mentor.
- Meetings should last approximately an hour.
- The Intern and the Priest Mentor should plan meeting dates, times, and location(s) as far in advance as possible.
- The purposes of the meetings:
 - To reflect on the Intern’s learning experiences.
 - To reflect on the parish’s needs, pastoral and otherwise.
 - To reflect how the Intern is proclaiming or can proclaim the Good News of the Gospel in light of these needs.
 - To integrate the summer experience with the formation of a priestly identity, recognizing the mutual nature of the Intern’s and the congregation’s ministry.
 - To support one another through the joys and challenges of the summer experience.

Lay Mentoring Committee

- The Mid-Atlantic Intern will meet with a Lay Mentoring Committee at least four times during the internship.
- This group should consist of 5-7 parishioners (5 is recommended).
- Lay Mentoring Committees should meet every other week during the internship, and plan the time/place of each meeting far in advance.
- Lay Mentoring Committee Meetings should last about one to two hours.
- The group facilitator (like a chair) should be selected by the priest rather than elected by the committee.
- Lay Mentoring Committees should provide unique insight into the following things:
 - Helping the Intern to understand the history, culture and dynamics of the parish.
 - Reflecting on the summer experience.
 - Integrating the summer experience with the formation of a priestly identity.
 - Supporting one another through the joys and challenges of the summer experience.

Mid-Atlantic Colloquy

- All Mid-Atlantic Interns who take part in full-time summer internships will be part of the Mid-Atlantic colloquy.
- The meeting location will be centrally located, based on interns’ placements.

- The colloquy will meet every other week.
- The group will be led by the Mid-Atlantic Director or another facilitator (but never by diocesan staff).
- Meeting dates, times, and locations will be determined by the Mid-Atlantic Director/facilitator in concert with the group members.
- Mentoring meetings should last 2-3 hours.
- Mentoring meetings are intended to provide Interns with a peer forum where the following can happen:
 - Reflection on the summer experience.
 - Integration of the summer experience with the formation of a priestly identity.
 - Support of one another through the joys and challenges of the summer experience.

Defining and Assessing the Summer Experience

The Letter of Intent: The letter briefly describes the role each person in Mid-Atlantic will play, solidifies the relationship between the Intern, Priest Mentor and congregation; and fosters clear communication. The letter of intent should be completed as soon as possible after the Intern and Priest Mentor come to a verbal agreement. A copy should be e-mailed to the program director and copies should be kept by the Intern and Priest Mentor and referred to throughout the summer.

The Summer Covenant: The covenant is designed to be highly flexible in order to reflect the vision the Intern and Priest Mentor have for the summer experience. The Intern and Priest Mentor articulate intentions for the summer. The terms of the covenant define the anticipated relationship between Intern and Priest Mentor and Intern and congregation, and set the expectations for the Intern's Mid-Atlantic experience. A copy of it is sent to the Mid-Atlantic Director.

Intern's Reflection Paper: Each Intern will write a reflection paper at the end of the summer experience. This reflection is to be shared with the Priest Mentor, Lay Mentoring Committee, and Mid-Atlantic Director.

Priest Mentor's Reflections: Priest Mentors are asked to write a reflection paper about the Intern and his or her work. This paper is shared with the Intern at the end of the internship.

Lay Committee's Reflection Paper: Members of the Lay Committee are asked to write a Reflection Paper about the Intern and his or her work. This should be a summary of the entire Lay Committee's reflections, prepared by the leader of the group or someone who he or she requests to do this. This paper is shared with the Intern at the end of the Mid-Atlantic experience.

Form Due Dates

Five documents are to be sent to the Mid-Atlantic Director over the course of the internship. They are:

- **By March 15:** The Letter of Intent
- **By end of first week of internship:** The Summer Covenant
- **By last day of internship:** The Lay Committee's reflection paper
- **A week after the last day of the internship:** The Intern's reflection paper
- **A week after the last day of the internship:** The Priest Mentor's reflections

Electronic copies of these five documents must be sent to the Mid-Atlantic Director no later than Labor Day so that they can be reviewed and forwarded to the Bishop's Office.

Timetable for the Mid-Atlantic Summer Experience: For Postulants Enrolled in an Episcopal M.Div. Program

- November:** Participants receive an e-mail from the Mid-Atlantic Director which provides potential parishes for the summer experience, and a link to this Guidebook. Interns make contact with clergy at the parishes and arrange for interviews.
- February 15:** Interviews conclude and internship selections are made.
- March 15:** The Letter of Intent is due to be completed and scanned to the Mid-Atlantic Director.
- April:** The Intern and Priest Mentor begin to communicate about the Summer Covenant.
- May:** If necessary, Priest Mentors meet with Mid-Atlantic Director at Shrine Mont during the Bishop's Spring Conference.
- May/June:** The Mid-Atlantic summer experience begins for each Intern on whichever date between mid-May and mid-June is covenanted with the Priest Mentor. **The Summer Covenant** is due to be completed and mailed to the Mid-Atlantic Director by the end of the first week of the internship. Mid-Atlantic Mentoring Groups begin to meet.
- July/August:** As each Intern's summer experience comes to a conclusion, the three reflections are completed, shared, and mailed to the Mid-Atlantic Director.
- 1 Week After Internship:** All paperwork to be completed and sent to the Mid-Atlantic Director.
- Labor Day:** The Mid-Atlantic Director turns over all paperwork to the Committee on Priesthood.

For Postulants Enrolled in an Anglican Studies Year

Often, Anglican Studies students' formational needs vary. This is an **example** of a timeline for a student who is admitted for postulancy in March and is instructed to do a Mid-Atlantic internship that summer. If an Intern is asked to do Mid-Atlantic in the second summer of their postulancy, they should follow the same timeline as the M.Div. students (*above*).

- March:** Participants receive an e-mail from the Mid-Atlantic Director which provides potential parishes for the summer experience, and a link to this Guidebook. Interns make contact with clergy at the parishes and arrange for interviews.
- April 15:** Interviews conclude and internship offers are made by the Priest Mentors.
- April 30:** The Letter of Intent is due to be completed and mailed to the Mid-Atlantic Director.
- After May:** Timetable is the same as M.Div. students. *See above*. The Summer Covenant is due to be completed and mailed to the Mid-Atlantic Director by the end of the first week of the internship.