

Minister-In-Training Program

This program is sponsored by the Board of Leadership and Outreach
of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference

1. Purpose of the Program

The minister-in-training program has been initiated to equip people for the Christian ministry. The Conference needs more qualified, trained ministers. As the Lord blesses our outreach, this need will likely increase. We have schools where potential ministers may acquire necessary academic and Biblical instruction. But preparation for the ministry involves more than just book learning. Ministerial trainees should also have the opportunity to get practical experience in congregational ministries. The EMC minister-in-training program is designed to meet this need. Through this program the student minister should be able to develop skills and techniques in congregational ministries within the context of an established church and under the supervision of an experienced pastor.

A secondary purpose of the program is to provide churches with temporary ministerial assistance. It is expected that student ministers will be able to make meaningful contributions to the church in which they are training.

2. Terms

The training program should run for a minimum of one year, and for a maximum of two years. If after two years the candidate has not been called to a different church, the existing situation should be evaluated and their relationship to the congregation should be reviewed.

The board recommends that the student minister not be ordained before the term of training is completed. If the situation is such that an earlier ordination seems preferable, and if the student minister is ready to receive ordination, they should proceed according to normal Conference procedures.

3. Financial Arrangements

The student minister will normally be expected to earn their own living. This fact must be considered when duties are assigned. If the church asks the student minister to spend some of their regular working time at church duties, the church should be ready to pay them for this time.

4. Responsibilities of the Congregation

The church should understand that the student minister would be involved in actual pastoral ministries. They may be called associate pastor, student minister, assistant minister, etc. The title is not important. But they should be recognized as a minister of that congregation and this decision should be made by an official church vote.

The church should provide assistance in locating suitable housing and an

appropriate job.

5. Responsibilities of the Pastor

- a. The pastor will accept the student minister as an associate in the ministry.
- b. The pastor is to ensure that the student minister has opportunities to be involved in the activities outlined and provide ongoing mentorship in those activities
- c. The pastor should meet with the trainee weekly for discussion and evaluation.
- d. When a minister-in-training program begins, the Conference Pastor should be advised. Upon completion of the program, a written report and evaluation should be sent to the Conference Pastor after it has been discussed with the trainee.

6. Program

The focus of the program should be an emphasis on the types of tasks a leading pastor would have in a church. Specialized ministries should be optional aspects of the program. Every effort should be made to involve the student minister in the practical aspects of the ministry.

- a. Required Activities
 - Teach classes such as Sunday school, Bible study or baptismal instruction.
 - Preach at least three times.
 - Plan and lead at least three worship services.
 - Participate in a baptismal service and instruction of baptismal candidates.
 - Participate in planning and leading a communion service.
 - Attend ministerial meetings and other board and committee meetings as deemed helpful.
 - Become familiar with the local church constitution.
 - Attend Conference Council and Conference ministerial meetings.
 - Attend at least one Anabaptist studies course or workshop sponsored by SBC.
 - Meet with the Conference Pastor to explore ministry opportunities.
 - Meet with the pastor once a month for discussion and evaluation.
 - Write a self-evaluation at the end of the training period, giving copies to the pastor and the Conference Pastor.
 - Keep a ministry journal.
- b. Desirable Activities
 - Participate in the counselling, rehearsal and ceremony of a wedding.
 - Participate in the events surrounding a funeral: planning with the family, the service, ministry to the bereaved.
 - Participate in hospital visitation.
 - Participate in the planning and leading of a special event such as a missions weekend or Bible teaching series.

7. Relating to the Conference

When student ministers attend Conference ministerial meetings and Conference Council sessions, they do not have voting privileges unless they are a delegate for that local church.

8. Conclusion

If a church is planning to engage a student minister, the board recommends that a meeting be arranged at which the church board, the pastor, the student minister, and the Conference Pastor discuss the application of these guidelines to that particular situation.

Student Minister Evaluation Form Outline

This form conforms to the minister-in-training program as outlined in the Conference Handbook. The pastor should write a final report indicating the extent of involvement in the various activities and a brief evaluation of each. The trainee should use the same form to write a self-evaluation. The pastor, student minister and Conference Pastor should each receive copies of each.

A. Required Activities

- **Teaching**
- **Preaching**
- **Worship services**
- **Baptismal instruction/service**
- **Communion service**
- **Meeting attendance**
- **Church Constitution**
- **Conference meetings**
- **Anabaptist studies**
- **Meeting with Conference Pastor**
- **Discussion/evaluation**
- **Self-evaluation**
- **Ministry journal**

B. Desirable Activities

- **Wedding**
- **Funeral**
- **Hospital Visitation**
- **Special event**