



Ministry and Leadership Incubator

Presbytery of Philadelphia

Program Outline

What New Ministry Will You Launch that Engages the Neighborhood Surrounding the Church?

This is the guiding question for the Ministry and Leadership Incubator. As seminarians and pastoral supervisors work alongside their host congregations, they will discern how the Spirit is inviting them to experiment with new ministry possibilities relevant to their surrounding neighborhood context. In efforts to foster a spirit of innovation, they will collectively work through resources and design tools able to foster collaborative ideation, understanding of the assets and needs of community and congregation, and the launch of sustainable embodiments of the gospel in response to identified local possibilities.

Leadership Lab

The seminarians not only serve within local congregations to leverage intentional, creative, and new ministry possibilities, but also form a cohort of budding practitioners in what is called the *Leadership Lab*. This Leadership Lab meets with staff and leaders from around the Presbytery for critical conversations framed around the unique challenges and opportunities for ministry in the twenty-first century. This enriched component of the field education experience enables seminarians to raise questions, test ministry ideas, learn from their peers, and engage seasoned ministry innovators from around the Presbytery. These gatherings take place three times per semester, with the first semester focused on equipping seminarians with relevant tools and conversations for designing new ministry, e.g. design thinking, neighborhood exegesis, etc., and the second semester featuring facilitated conversations on topics requested by seminarians and addressed by panels of local ministry leaders. The program concludes with a collective spring worship service coordinated and led by the seminarians at one of the participating congregations.

Ministry Snapshots

Beginning in September, seminarians exegete, i.e. interpret, both the congregational and community contexts to develop a 7-slide, 7-minute presentation, i.e. *ministry snapshot*, that can be shared with the larger cohort of seminarians at the November Leadership Lab. This presentation is to be developed as a pairing within each church and will help to expose the assets, challenges, risks, and opportunities for relevant ministry innovation in their particular placement. These presentations will be revisited in March, i.e. Ministry Snapshots: A Second Look, as a part of the Leadership Lab. This will be a chance to review first impressions in light of a nine-months of shared ministry. In many ways, this is the practice when one takes a first call in a congregation or ministry. These snapshots are intended to be a guide for launching a new ministry effort in their host congregation.

Digital Discussion Groups

We host on-line discussions and groups through relevant platforms in efforts to engage one another during the course of the entire year. These platforms will enable the cohort to engage in periodic readings and informal discussions relevant to ministry in the 21st Century.

Mid-Year Feedback Loops

In January/February, Presbytery staff meets with each pairing of seminarians for a 45-minute block of time for feedback from Presbytery staff related to their ministry incubation and leadership development. In many ways, this provides an additional ministry coaching opportunity for seminarians beyond their regular supervision with the pastor of their host congregation. These Feedback Loops will also be an opportunity for seminarians to share about their experience in the program thus far and where they are in the process of designing and implementing a new ministry initiative.

Supervising within the Ministry and Leadership Incubator

What to Consider in the Beginning

- Affirm congregation that they are a part of this ministry leadership development program and will play a significant role in the seminarians growth and possibilities;
- Affirm seminarians placement as a part of the whole Ministry and Leadership Incubator program; be sure to incorporate this experience into supervision conversations;
- Provide intentional opportunity for the seminarians to be welcomed by and introduced to the congregation, e.g. fellowship hour, meet-and-greets, bios in bulletins, Q & A as a part of Sunday School, etc.; consider a Seminarian Welcome Team that checks in with them and provides feedback over the course of the year.
- Create space for the seminarians to learn the history/context of both congregation and community; provide space for seminarians to honestly expose any potential biases/assumptions about the congregation before they develop ministry efforts; consider using these resources at the beginning: <http://www.stollecreative.com/resources/>;
- Discuss the Ministry Snapshot Project that will be presented in the Leadership Lab; this project is intended to be developed by the seminarians as a raw and honest first look at the congregation and community; pastoral input should be minimal at this stage, yet aware of their discoveries;
- Work to identify possibilities related to a new ministry that could be explored, tested, and moved towards sustainability as a result of their service alongside the congregation and to the benefit of the local community. Identify measurable goals, potential leaders, needs to launch and sustain, evaluative metrics, storytelling platforms, etc. Utilize provided tools/resources provided by the Presbytery staff and create a context where risk and failure are not feared;
- Frame supervision schedule and goals; work in rhythm with the guidelines provided by Princeton Theological Seminary's Field Education Handbook; consider resources and/or books that would be worth sharing and walking through together;
- Develop a plan to communicate with the congregation and Presbytery the ministry happenings through the work and witness of the seminarians. Explore varied platforms, to include digital media, photography, social networking, etc. In essence, share the story!
- Questions to consider at the beginning:
 - What makes your congregation and context unique- what assets do you bring? What challenges do you face?
 - What makes each seminarian uniquely gifted for ministry possibilities? Where might these areas intersect with the assets and opportunities of the congregation?
 - Where are there possible areas of ministry innovation and development that could be explored? Especially consider areas yet to be tested yet always dreamed. How do these possibilities uniquely embody the gospel and mission of the church?
 - How will the seminarians tell the story of their ministry through varied communication and media platforms, e.g. photography, website, blogs, social media, videos, etc.? Prioritize this element of their ministry both now and moving forward.
 - How will you both evaluate and build upon the ministry of the seminarians after they leave?
- At the earliest outset, anticipate becoming independent site for field education seminarians if of interest to congregation. Recruitment begins a year in advance.