



# **TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY**

**PASTORAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

**Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church • Bryn Mawr, PA**

## LILLY TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY

# PASTORAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

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## BRYN MAWR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BRYN MAWR, PA

The first years of a ministerial career are often challenging. A young minister must establish a new identity as pastor and develop the work and study habits necessary for providing spiritual leadership for a congregation. Yet many new pastors in their first congregations find themselves professionally and geographically isolated, receiving too little support in working through tough transitional issues and developing a healthy pastoral identity. The result is that many promising and gifted young pastors become frustrated and drop out of ministry within the first years of their service. In other cases, inexperienced pastors may slip into leadership styles and practices that are detrimental to congregational life and unable to sustain their ministries. Recognizing this trend, the Lilly Endowment began supporting a small number of pilot projects aimed at assisting new pastors in making the critical transition from seminary student to full-time pastor as part of its larger effort to strengthen the preparation of pastoral leaders. The goal of their initiative was to strengthen pastoral leadership by supporting a variety of pilot projects that test new ways for helping new pastors move through the transition from student to pastor.

The majority of projects are congregation-based residency programs in which new pastors spend time as residents in a teaching congregation before assuming other positions of congregational service and leadership. Bryn Mawr is fortunate to be one of five Presbyterian congregations and 30 congregations of other denominations that host and support recent seminary graduates who seek to make the transition to congregational ministry.

We believe that it is part of our calling to develop caring and creative leaders. With our common life centered on worship and mission, a staff committed to mentoring young pastors and a congregation that is socially engaged, intellectually curious, spiritually hungry and pastorally challenging, we provide a rich context for ministry and pastoral training. It is our hope that our pastoral residents will develop:

- Skills for effective ministry by practicing and participating in diverse ministry contexts
- Habits for healthy ministry by committing to spiritual, emotional and intellectual disciplines
- Imagination for creative ministry by involvement in local artistic, academic and interfaith communities
- Pastoral identity for faithful and authentic ministry by regular theological reflection
- A maturing faculty of judgment and deepening awareness of the Spirit's work necessary for wise ministry by regular prayer and worship with partners and mentors in ministry.

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# THE PROGRAM

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In two years, residents participate in ministry rotations centered on five basic dimensions of congregational life: worship, mission, organization, community and education. Worship is central to the life of our congregation and pastoral residents participate by preaching, providing worship and sacramental leadership, involvement in music and the arts, and conducting special services such as weddings, funerals, healing and wholeness, and commissioning. Missional life involves residents in global ministries, local outreach, evangelism, and ecumenical and interfaith engagement as they witness and help lead the congregation in ministries of peace, justice and love. The Organizational life of the congregation consists of stewardship, personnel and financial administration, leadership and budget development, communication and ministry structures. Here our pastoral residents gain the essential practical experience of maintaining and transforming a complex community. Educational life includes spiritual development, church school and discipleship for all ages. Pastoral residents teach church school, lead weekday Bible Studies, offer classes in Adult Education and assist in the Confirmation Class. Community life comprises pastoral care and counseling, fellowship and other aspects of our common life. In this rotation, pastoral residents provide pastoral care, build-up the community and make connections between members, councils and other groups within the congregation.

Each resident participates in the Worship Life of the congregation and offers pastoral care throughout the two-year program. Rotations in Organizational Life and Missional Life are required in the first year. Residents select two of three other rotations in their second year (Community Life, Educational Life or more directed work in Worship Life). After becoming oriented to the general discipline, residents engage in a more focused area of ministry within each rotation. A balance between the practice of and reflection on ministry is the goal. A unique feature of our program are one-month structured pauses between rotations for critical thought and reflection, dialogue with other faith communities, and time for recreation and contemplation. Residents use this time and space to recognize the connections between their experiences in congregational ministry, relationships with colleagues, theological reflection, spiritual direction and individual therapy; in short, to learn to enter into dialogue with self and others as they live into their calling.

Essential to the program are weekly “table talks”: time for dinner and focused discussions with the pastor, program director, associate pastors and occasional guests. Theological reflection, evaluation of sermons, discussion of assigned readings, sharing of ministry experiences and prayer are central to these times of study and fellowship.

# TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY

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# LOOKING AHEAD

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It is our prayer that participation in the Lilly Transition into Ministry Program will continue to transform our congregation as well as our pastoral residents. We trust that awareness and appreciation of our identity as a mentoring community will expand and deepen and that we will be able to extend vocational care and concern to all who enter our doors seeking meaning and purpose. The lessons learned with residents will enable us to be a more intentional and skilled community of discernment--one that prays and stays with those trying to understand their purpose and vocation, welcomes dialogue on questions of meaning and purpose, encourages growth and change, and shapes and mentors with integrity and intention. We are grateful to past and current residents for enriching our common life. They have invited us to re-examine why and how we do ministry, they have questioned and strengthened programs and traditions, they have cared with and for us, and they have challenged us to be faithful to our calling with imagination and hope as they have served us with innovation and enthusiasm.

## PASTORAL RESIDENTS

### 2000-2004

Jacqueline Cho

Sonya McAuley-Allen

Steven Jungkeit

Jamie Harris

Tara Woodard-Lehman

Adan Mairena



Cathy Chang



Becky White Newgren

### 2007-2009

Cathy Chang

Rebecca White Newgren



Susan Sytsma Bratt



Graham Ford

### 2008-2010

Susan Sytsma Bratt

Graham Ford