

Parish Ministry and Administration 101
“The Dash between the Nitty and the Gritty”

This course shows how to make the pastoral ministry JOB the best job in the world. It relies on an ecclesiology of parish as the hands and feet of Jesus, an incarnational hope that our worldly work can carry heavenly hopes to human being, and an eschatological witness that now is the time when we can see the realm of God, and a Eucharistic meeting of transformed people and elements into a world of plenty for all. While it is very practical, even mundane in many of its subjects, not one of these subjects lacks a sense of God.

It teaches the daily life of a parish minister in such a way as to reveal the informal job descriptions inside the formal ones. It teaches how to custom design the job description in a variety of denominational, racial, cultural and class settings. For full time or part time pastors, this course will result in an extravagant and manageable job description for the pastor. The outcome of the course is to lessen the role confusion of pastoral ministry and to give the pastor a democratically won authority to do the actual work and job of “shepherding a flock.” – and to enjoy the heaven out of it. This course will be particularly useful to pastors who are overwhelmed by their jobs and are wondering if they dare continue in parish ministry. It will also be useful for seminarians who wonder if they are called to the reality of parish ministry. At the end of the course, students will be able to define parish ministry for themselves in their contexts.

Course Number _____

SUMMER 2010, AUGUST 8 – 13
AFTERNOONS

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Bio:

Donna Schaper is Senior Minister of Judson Memorial Church, where worship is lively and experimental, undocumented immigrants lead the New York City New Sanctuary Movement, a half dozen seminarians are trained each year in public ministry, a “Bailout Theater” feeds and enjoys the homeless, and Greenwich Village gathers with frequency in a variety of artistic and political modes. The theology of the parish understands the ordinary to be the vehicle of the sacred.

She also blogs on the Huffington Post and has written 31 books, most recently SACRED CHOW: HOLY WAYS TO EAT and FORTY DAYS WITH HOWARD THURMAN. Her best

selling book is KEEPING SABBATH, a way to deal with the time famine and to stay alive in ministry.

She writes and consults as a “turn around Specialist” for several congregations through “Bricks Without Straw, “ her personal consulting service which teaches the arts and crafts of fund raising, getting noticed and making change from a parish base.

She is best known for a *New York Times* OPED called “The Heretic in the Hibiscus” which chronicled her rejection by the Coral Gables Garden Club for membership and her appearance on the Bill O’Reilly show debating him on the matter of “undocumented” immigrants.

Outcomes For Seminarians, Employed Pastors and the Congregations they serve

The student will leave the course with a beginning understanding of pastoral care, administration and pastoral role. They will leave with a revised and revisable personal job description and plan for achieving it and negotiating it with the congregation. The student will know what kind of theological assumptions are made by choosing one particular and contextualized version of the work.

The student will leave the course knowing how to educate the congregation about expectations for the pastor’s ministry.

The student will leave the course knowing how to educate the congregation about what he/she does on a daily, weekly and annual basis.

The congregation can expect the pastor who takes this course to leave behind role and job confusion and to achieve greater clarity about what to do and not to do as the pastor of that particular parish.

Both pastor and congregation can expect greater clarity about their focus and mission for the pastor’s anticipated term.

If the student is a seminarian, the seminarian can expect to leave with a greater understanding of what parish ministry really is, how they themselves might fit into its reality, and to begin to test their particular gifts and life purposes against the reality of the parish ministry job.

Seminarians and employed pastors can anticipate leaving with a greater sense of joy about the possibilities of turning the call of parish ministry into a job that is worth doing and having an increased sense of power about how to lead congregations.

Ultimately, this course will begin to equip ministers for a variety of ministries by isolating what is specific to the parish ministry and will be a Eucharistic sign of the presence of God among us and through us.

Daily Schedule

Day One

Pastoral Care: Wellness Calling. Developing a strategy for regular care of the congregation, which anticipates crisis and develops ongoing relationship with people. When trouble happens, you already know the person or family. In a congregation of 200 members, it is easy to visit five per week over the year. What matters are the number you will visit and how wellness is your objective. Crisis management is NOT pastoral care; wellness care is. Your job is not to put out fires or manage trouble but to start fires and ignite spiritual energy. Your job is to heal and be present as an ongoing sign of God.

Funerals. Hands on How To, including how to learn the culture of your congregation, whether you get paid, how to handle the additional staff.

Baptisms. Hands on How To, including how to learn the culture of your congregation.

Weddings. Hands on How To, for members and non-members, mixed marriages and serial divorces

Encouraging New Members: How to be in Charge of the Campaign and not take “Growth” on as your responsibility but to share it.

When Conflict Erupts Interpersonally: Learning to be Glad at the Eruption of Conflict because it means growth, change and engagement

Day Two

Administration

Board Care and Development: Why Administration is Holy and learning how to love it. Governance matters! It is a holy task to which we are also ordained. Learning how to raise money and ask for it as well as how to manage staff and volunteers.

Written Materials, Self and Congregational Promotion

Web, newsletter, bulletins. Stewardship Spiritually Reconsidered for Practical Success.

An Incarnational attitude towards parish administration shows how sacred the ordinary really is.

When Task Force, When Committee? A Permission Giving Method of Ministry. How to avoid having to go to lots of meaningless meetings and how to always know what you want when you do go to a meeting. Learning how to keep meetings to one hour.

When Conflict Erupts Institutionally: Learning to be Glad at the Eruption of Conflict because it means growth, change and engagement

Day Three

The Pastor as Person

Boundaries. Theologically and spiritually analyzing the now cliché of “boundaries” and getting practice in how to have them without overdoing it. Sexuality is NOT the only boundary issue. Boundary issues include time, money, conflict and self-definition, knowing

where you stop and the “other” starts. Boundary issues involve the whole range of what it means to be human, one who embodies Jesus but is also not Jesus.

Praise and Criticism – about your clothes or your life. When to put on the bulletproof vest and when to take it off.

The Pastor’s Partner. Expectations, yours and the parish’s. How to negotiate agreement and train the congregation to understand what you and your family want and need, will do and won’t do.

The Pastor’s Children. Expectations, yours and the parish’s. How to negotiate agreement.

The Pastor’s Work Week

Time management

Sabbath keeping. When does the Pastor worship?

Salary, benefit and housing negotiations. The Pastor’s Salary: How to get Paid Well over Time, Sabbaticals, Vacations, Study Leaves. Tax breaks, housing, work outside the parish.

Day Four

Money Matters

The Art of the Ask for you and for the congregation: Raising Money, Energy, Involvement, and Commitment. Whose money is it anyway? Money is just energy in exchange – and getting to see it as something that is not dirty but potentially holy will inform this part of the course.

Learning how to Quantify and Measure: Parish Assessment and Self-Assessments

Learning how much things really cost, especially how much “crisis” costs.

How to value the right interruptions and to ignore the others.

Creating Budgets for Time and Money: Learning how to live in the Black, not the red.

Day Five

Parishes in the 21st Century: What’s new, what’s not.

Generational Differences: Space Issues, “Dedowdyization” of the parish space.

Green Uses of Large Buildings: Multiple Uses and How to make “Owners” comfortable with Guests and Guests Comfortable with Owners

Post Modernism, Interfaith, and Mixed Couples: Who is Normal in Which kind of Congregation

Race, Sex, Class, Ability, Orientation: How these things affect a parish’s life and how to gain diversity without losing the gifts of folk and homogeneous culture.

How Public Ministry matters to a Parochial Institution

Using Technology, even if you aren't an expert. Finding the experts and asking for help.

Eschatology : How is the Then of God's time already present here in the Now?

Readings:

Students will choose five selections with professor's guidance, one per day and for final paper.

Diana Butler Bass, *Practicing Congregations, Imaging a New Old Church*.

N. Lynn Westfield, *Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality*.

Patricia O'Connell and John de Ber, *The Art of Theological Reflection*.

James and Evelyn Whitehead, *Methods in Ministry*.

Susan Farnham [et.al](#). *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*

Parker Palmer, *Let your Life Speak*.

Yale Divinity School, Reflections Magazine, "How Firm a Foundation? Churches face the future." Fall 2009

The Turnaround Church, by Mary Lou Gifford.

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Leaving Church: A memoir of Faith*

Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*

Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality of Leadership in Multi Cultural Communities*.

Lynn Westfield, *Womanist Practices of Hospitality*

Lowell Livezey, *Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City*

Kathleen Talvacchia. *Critical Minds Discerning Hearts: A Spirituality of Multicultural Teaching*.

Martin Copenhaver and Lillian Daniel, *This Odd and Wondrous Calling*

Martin Copenhaver, "When the Pastor Faces Criticism", *Christian Century*, April 2009.

Poet in Residence: Listening for the Sacred Subtext by Craig Barnes, *Christian Century*, February 10, 2009.

Imagination and the Pastoral Life: A way of seeing by Craig Dykstra, *Christian Century*, April 8, 2008.

Conflict Intensity Chart: A Resource for Committees on the Ministry, Presbyterian Church, USA.

Assorted Articles about Not for Profit Leadership, The Role of Lay People and the Myth of the Associate Pastor by Donna Schaper in Alban Institute's Congregations.

Altar Call: Gaining Commitment in Congregations to Mission by Donna Schaper

Assignments

1) Job Description – two pages

For the employed pastor, this would be real, not virtual, and ready for negotiation with the congregation upon return. The job description should give a theological as well as a practical rationale.

An Ideal Job description for the Seminarian, allowing the seminarian to define what kind of call he/ she is seeking.

2) Final Paper – five pages

A daily, weekly and annual plan for operationalizing (doing) your job description.

Each of these documents would include dialogue with five of the assigned readings, showing how they relate to the particular culture of the congregation being described.

Due one month after the course ends, by email, to the instructor.

Please note that this course is based on experiential learning and uses that model for learning. It is in the practical theology field.

Grading Policy

Letter grades will be given upon completion of the final papers. Each paper must show that the assigned readings were done and will be judged for clarity and manageability of the job definition in its particular context. Attendance at all sessions is assumed; no absences without express permission of the instructor.

Class participation: 50% of the grade.

Job description and final paper: 50% of the grade

All assignments are due one month after the course ends to the instructor by email. Incompletes will be offered after that date of September 13.

Plagiarism policy for the class can be found at <http://www.psr.edu/grades>. An ESL policy is also listed there, which will inform this class.

Internet use is permitted in the classroom as long as it is not disruptive to class discussion.

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