



# Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center

ACTS Student Handbook

**Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center**  
**Academy Certified Training System (ACTS)**  
**Student Handbook**  
(effective June 1, 2005)

Welcome to the Academy Certified Training System (ACTS) offered through the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center. You may be exploring ministry, answering a call to ministry, and/or seeking further education. We will prayerfully support you on this journey. This handbook will be a reference guide for you as you complete ACTS requirements.

**SVMC Staff...**

Donna Rhodes, Executive Director  
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**The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center is...**

A Church of the Brethren Ministry Education Partnership of Atlantic Northeast District, Middle Pennsylvania District, Southern District of Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania District, Mid-Atlantic District and Bethany Theological Seminary.

**Our Mission Statement...**

To equip leaders for ministry in a regionally based, Christ centered culturally relevant context in ways that bear witness to the beliefs, heritage and practices of the Church of the Brethren.

**A Description...**

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center is a district sponsored delivery system of ministry training opportunities at both the graduate and certificate levels. This handbook focuses on information for ACTS students.

# **Admission Procedures & Records**

## **Admission Procedures for Licensed Ministers**

Licensed Ministry candidates and Lay Speakers seeking admission to the ACTS program should contact the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center office following an interview with the District Ministry Commission during the licensing process.

After approval of the District Ministry Commission and the congregation, the SVMC office will send an admission form to each student. Students need to complete this form, and return it to the SVMC office in order to be admitted to the class. In addition, each student entering the program with the intention of exploring ministry training will be required to write an essay of approximately 300 words describing their calling. This essay will be submitted to the SVMC office. The purpose of this essay is to give a sample of writing skills and a baseline of where the student is in their calling to ministry.

## **Admission Procedures for Lay Persons**

Lay persons wishing to enroll in ACTS courses should contact the SVMC office.

## **Admission Procedure for Continuing Education**

Ministers seeking Continuing Education units should contact the SVMC office to register for the course and specify that a Continuing Education certificate is being requested.

## **Educational Placement**

As the students are interviewed in their District setting, the District Ministry Commission will inform them of educational track possibilities and refer them to the services of SVMC. The staff of the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center will help students develop an educational plan based on education completed and their future goals.

As the staff guides the students to an educational track, the following criteria are considered: previous educational background, future plans for ministry, context for ministry, and ability.

Possible educational tracks are: ACTS, TRIM, occasional student/graduate level, and graduate level.

Each district has TRIM coordinators who will work cooperatively with SVMC. SVMC will offer TAL (TRIM academy level) courses for TRIM students to meet some of their requirements.

## **Student Educational Records**

All student educational records will be kept at the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center office until the completion of the program. Upon completion of the program, one copy of the transcript will be sent to the respective District Office. One copy of the transcript will remain at the SVMC office. During the educational process, SVMC staff and District Executives have access to the files. Students may view their personal file at any point.

## **Exploring Ministry Training Essay**

Each student entering the program with the intention of exploring ministry training will be required to write an essay of approximately 300 words describing their calling. This essay will be submitted to the SVMC office. The purpose of the essay is to give a sample of writing skills and a baseline of where the student is in their calling to ministry.

Some students will receive the recommendation to take the pre-requisite course of Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry. This self-paced course will provide the students opportunities to strengthen understanding of grammar and communication skills, primarily in written form. This course will count as one elective.

## **Plagiarism**

Presenting the work of others as one's own without proper acknowledgement of the source is plagiarism. This includes written material from books and periodicals, as well as, internet sources such as text, photos, or video. Students must cite the source of the information. Failure to properly acknowledge the work of others may result in no credit for the course. More information on proper documentation can be found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

## **Academy Certified Training System Synopsis**

In 1999, the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren adopted polity in Ministerial Leadership for the denomination. Included in this polity is a description of educational requirements for ordination. One provision within this polity states:

*In special cases that have the approval of the District Ministry Commission, and where provision is made for accountability and supervision, another alternative is a district administered program of ministry education certified by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.<sup>i</sup>*

The Academy Certified Training System (ACTS) has been developed in collaboration with the District Executives of the five partnering districts and approved by the Governing Board of the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center believes strongly that our students in ministry training need to develop a spiritual rootedness as they prepare to be leaders in the church. Recognizing and embracing the fact that God is our foundation, we seek to encourage the students to deepen their spirituality using a variety of spiritual disciplines throughout their educational process. Students are provided the opportunity for spiritual formation through groups, class work, and individual instruction.

Ministry training in ACTS will occur through structured courses, ministry formation experience offered in each district, and supervised ministry experience offered in each district.

- Courses are offered in regionally based settings and on-line. There are twelve courses required.
- Ministry formation will occur in a setting where students share with one another about the unique experiences, questions, uncertainties, problems, dilemmas, successes, and failures. Together, students learn about their own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses as they place themselves in the various ministry situations shared with the group.
- The supervised ministry experience occurs when the students are paired with an experienced minister. Together, they will explore and experience the daily needs and challenges of ministry. This will occur approximately midway through educational program.

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center staff, the SVMC Governing Board and the District Executives will work closely with ACTS to monitor the educational and administrative progress.

# **Spiritual Plan**

(Excerpt from ACTS Plan)

The Academy Certified Training System (ACTS) of the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC) believes strongly that our students in ministry training need to develop a spiritual rootedness as they prepare to be leaders in the church. Recognizing and embracing the fact that God is our foundation, we seek to encourage the students to deepen their spirituality using a variety of spiritual disciplines throughout their educational process. Students will be provided the opportunity for spiritual formation through groups, class work, and individual instruction.

## **Biblical Foundation for Spiritual Discernment<sup>ii</sup>**

In Christ, the believer is a new creation. 2 Cor. 5:17-18

New life for the believer is defined as a change from old behaviors. 1 Tim. 3:2-13; Tit. 1:5-8; 2:2-8; Gal. 5:19-24

The believer is being changed into the likeness of Christ. 2 Cor. 3:18

The believer grows toward maturity. Eph. 4:13

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God. Romans 12:1-2

Let each of you lead the life...to which God called you. 1 Cor. 7:17

Followers of Christ live with integrity. Matt. 5:33-37

‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.’ Matt. 25:40

Christians believe that all of life is sacred. Matt. 5:21-24

Believers are committed to high values Matt. 6:19-24

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Col. 3:16-17

Followers of Christ abstain from those things that harm and destroy the body. 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Sisters and brothers in Christ strive for healing and reconciliation. Matt 5:25-26, 43-48; 6:12, 14-15; 18:15-17; Rom. 12:14-21

Sisters and brothers in Christ live in a caring community where each part of the body is valued. 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4

We are no longer strangers, but we are members of the household of God. Ephesians 2:11-22

Jesus said to them...”As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” John 20:21<sup>iii</sup>

The scripture continues to call us to the understanding that we are created new in Jesus Christ and are being changed into the likeness of Christ. Our journey is one of on-going growth calling us to high values and integrity. We are called to live the example of Jesus Christ by being Christ’s hands, feet, and body on earth.

We are called to live out the teaching of Jesus Christ and embrace the values of our denomination as we minister with one another as students in ministry training, teachers equipping students, administrators of the ACTS program, and with those we encounter daily.

### **Spiritual Formation**

As students preparing for ministry and as seasoned ministers, our spiritual formation is ongoing. Richard Foster, in Spiritual Classics, makes some helpful statements about spiritual formation. “Spiritual formation involves a fundamental choice. Choosing to live for Jesus Christ may mean adopting a certain style of life, or perhaps more properly, a rule of life. We take on a series of spiritual practices that will open us to God’s work in our lives. At the same time we need to remember that spiritual transformation is a work of grace. It is what God does in us. ...One more thing to remember: spiritual formation is on-going. We need not be impatient; we need take no measurements.”<sup>iv</sup>

Spiritual formation is not as measurable as some other ministry skills may be. The ACTS program aspires to provide students with opportunities and examples; we trust in the transformative power and grace of God to work in the lives of individual students

### **Incorporating Spiritual Disciplines into ACTS**

We seek God’s guidance in our planning and our relationship to the students. Opportunities for spiritual disciplines are incorporated into the ACTS program in the formation of the students, the modeling of the teachers, and the administration of the program.

### **Students**

Each student is encouraged to be open to God through him/herself, congregation, counselor/mentor, District Executive and District Ministry Commission. We should be open to discerning calls whether they come as a *bright light* or a *still small voice*. The support of the student’s congregation, counselor/mentor, and district can be helpful in the discernment of the call and guidance. The importance of the relationship among the student, counselor/mentor, and congregation should not be undervalued. Challenge, support, discernment, and understanding can be offered through these important

relationships. The mentor will support the students, as well as, challenge the student to reach the next level of growth. Each district will follow the counselor/mentor guidelines set forth by its ministry commission.

Students are encouraged to journal throughout the entire educational process. In doing so students may document personal interaction and reflection on their own personal theological and faith development as it relates to specific courses, assignments, and ministry incidents. This exercise allows students to record experiences and reflection and to monitor their personal growth throughout the training journey. Students may use this journal regularly with their supervisor for discussion and reflection. In addition, the journal will provide a valuable collection of responses that will help students evaluate their entire educational and ministry experience.

Students are encouraged to be cognizant of spiritual disciplines and have a devotional style and plan which should include prayer, Bible study, and meditation. The ACTS program recognizes that there is not a “one size fits all” devotional plan; rather, students should seek what contributes to their spiritual formation as they develop and deepen a spiritual rootedness. Exploration of the inner disciplines of study, meditation, prayer and fasting; outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service; and corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration is encouraged.<sup>v</sup>

# **Learning Plan**

(Excerpt from ACTS plan)

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center seeks to equip leaders for ministry in a regionally based, Christ centered, culturally relevant context in ways that bear witness to the beliefs, heritage and practices of the Church of the Brethren.

One of the ways SVMC seeks to do this is through our Academy Certified Training System.

The program will generally require four years to complete. Students may enter at any point in the training cycle.

The ACTS program shall include the following educational components:

Twelve or more academic courses

Training experiences

- Ministry Formation
- Supervised Ministry
- Annual Conference
- District Conference

Courses and other components of ACTS will be designed to achieve the basic competencies for ministry established by the Ministry Advisory Council as a standard for all ministry training programs of the Church of the Brethren.

Basic requirements for completion of ACTS courses:

- Fifteen or more contact hours per course
- Each course will have required reading which includes a primary text and assigned supplemental reading to adequately cover the subject area.
- Reading will be supplemented by one or more major assignments, such as a comparative book review, research paper on a specific topic, interviews and pastoral conversations, sermons, or teaching outlines. Assignments integrating reading or research with the student's ministry are especially desirable.
- Students will be evaluated based on work completed, including written projects, tests, congregational feedback instruments, taped sermons, in addition to classroom discussions and conversations between student and supervisor.
- The instructor will prepare a written assessment of the scope and quality of the students' work.

## **Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center ACTS course schedule**

To successfully complete the ACTS program, students will:

- Complete the following course categories
  - 3 Biblical (Old Testament, New Testament, Interpreting the Bible) Courses
  - 3 Historical/Theological (History of the Church, Brethren Life & Thought, Theology) Courses
  - 5 Ministry Skills (of these six—Church Leadership & Administration, **required due to polity component;** Introduction to Pastoral Care, Teaching & Learning in the Church, Preaching, Worship, Church Vitality & Evangelism) Courses
  - 1 elective—(can be the sixth ministry skill course, online class, Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry, or another approved course.)
- Participate in Ministry Formation
- Participate in Supervised Ministry
- Attend one district conference and one Annual Conference

Topics from the former courses of Ethics, Stewardship, and Prayer & Spiritual Growth will be included in Ministry Formation.

### **Plan of courses for Atlantic Northeast, Middle PA, Southern PA, Mid-Atlantic** (offered on a rotating cycle)

(2008-09)

Introduction to the Old Testament (B)  
Brethren Life & Thought (H/T)  
Teaching & Learning in the Church (MS)

(2009-10)

Introduction to the New Testament (B)  
Theology (H/T)  
Interpreting the Bible (B)

(2010-11)

Preaching (MS)  
Worship (MS)  
Church Vitality & Evangelism (MS)

(2011-12)

Church Leadership & Administration (MS)  
History of the Church (H/T)  
Introduction to Pastoral Care (MS)

Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry will be offered yearly.

**Plan of courses for  
Western PA**

(offered on a rotation cycle)

Because Western PA meets for intensive Saturday classes, their schedule will be:

(2008-09)

Introduction to the New Testament (B)

Theology (H/T)

Preaching (MS)

Worship (MS)

(2009-10)

Church Leadership & Administration (MS)

History of the Church (H/T)

Introduction to Pastoral Care (MS)

Brethren Life & Thought (H/T)

(2010-11)

Introduction to the Old Testament (B)

Teaching & Learning in the Church (MS)

Interpreting the Bible (B)

Church Vitality & Evangelism (MS)

## **Basic Objectives--ACTS Courses**

### **Biblical**

#### Introduction to the Old Testament

- Define the canon and describe differences between Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish canons
- Identify the books of the Old Testament and describe their literary type, as well as, the basic issues or themes
- Describe an overview of Hebrew history and identify 25 key figures or events in the timeline of the history
- Relate major themes of the Old Testament with present day life

#### Introduction to the New Testament

- Identify the books of the New Testament and describe their literary type, as well as, the basic issues or themes
- Identify the different themes and “personalities” of the gospels
- Identify the features of Jesus’ ministry and message
- Relate major themes of the New Testament with present day life

#### Interpreting the Bible

- Use basic Bible study tools in biblical interpretation
- Demonstrate skills in exegeting a biblical passage and in using that exegesis as the basis for a sermon or teaching outline
- Articulate the role of the faith community in the process of biblical interpretation as understood in the Anabaptist tradition

### **Historical/Theological**

#### History of the Church

- Gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the heritage of the Christian church
- Develop a sense of the rich diversity in beliefs, worship, and church practice within the Christian tradition
- Articulate where the Brethren heritage of Anabaptism and Pietism occur within the larger context of Christian history

#### Brethren Life & Thought

- Describe the basic beliefs, values, and ministries which characterize the faith and life of the Church of the Brethren
- Articulate the value and meaning of the ordinances of the Church of the Brethren
- Engage in conversation about Brethren heritage and what the heritage means to the role of the church today

## Theology

- Challenge students to think theologically about their life and the world around them
- Develop an understanding of Believer Church tradition, theology, and vision
- Enable students to articulate a statement of faith that express personal beliefs about the Christian message
- Understand basic theological principles of the Christian church

## **Ministry Skills**

### Church Leadership & Administration (required as of 4/6/05)

- Demonstrate the ability to work collegially
- Be familiar with Brethren polity and the organizational plan for the present congregation
- Compare different leadership styles and identify strengths and weaknesses in his/her style
- Define the issue of conflict and describe ways of dealing with conflict in the church
- Demonstrate skills in leading a meeting and/or leading a church group in planning and carrying out a particular task

### Introduction to Pastoral Care

- Articulate the meaning of and differences in pastoral care and pastoral counseling
- Demonstrate skills needed for pastoral care
- Demonstrate the understanding of the importance of referral in counseling
- Describe critical points in life for which the ministries of care and counseling are often needed
- Distinguish between situations appropriately dealt with by pastoral counselors and those which need referral for other help

### Teaching & Learning in the Church

- Articulate the varied ways teaching and learning take place in a faith community
- Demonstrate skills in preparing and leading a learning session
- Articulate an understanding of the stages of faith
- Name the qualities that Jesus demonstrated in teaching

### Preaching

- Articulate the biblical basis of preaching
- Demonstrate skills in exegeting a particular biblical passage and use the exegesis as the basis of a sermon
- Demonstrate skills in preaching

### Worship

- Articulate the biblical basis of worship
- Define the basic components of a service of worship
- Develop an integrated worship service clearly demonstrating the theme through scripture, sermon topic, hymns selection, and other pieces of the worship service

### Church Vitality & Evangelism

- Reflect on evangelism related to the person and ministry of Jesus and the experience of the early church, early Anabaptist movement, and the Church of the Brethren
- Articulate understandings of evangelism and church growth when considering issues of congregational life such as church size, dynamics, traditions and vision
- Assess your current congregation in terms of hospitality and vision for growth

### Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry

- Demonstrate effective writing and speaking skills
- Articulate an understanding of the important of good communication skills for church leaders
- Demonstrate the ability to produce quality newsletter items, correspondence, and other pieces needed in pastoral ministry

## CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

Participation in at least one Annual Conference and District Conference during the student's enrollment in the ACTS is expected. Written reflection on the experience must be provided to the district appointed counselor/mentor and to SVMC for students' file.

## MINISTRY FORMATION

Participation in a Ministry Formation group was established by Annual Conference several years ago as an important component in the training and development of Church of the Brethren ministers.

The Ministry Formation experience approaches the training and development of leadership in the Church of the Brethren from the perspective that an integral part of ministry is relationship and people oriented. Required course work provides the academic portion of a student's training. Yet becoming an effective minister in the Church of the Brethren requires much more than book knowledge. It requires people and relational skills that can only be acquired and developed in a setting where students share with one another about their unique experiences, questions, uncertainties, problems, dilemmas, successes and failures. Together, the students learn about their own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses as they place themselves in the various ministry situations shared with the group. Ministry is *formed* in an ongoing process where the individual learns from others. True to the Brethren understanding of community discernment in dealing with issues, ministry formation is, by nature, group oriented.

The actual content of District Ministry Formation meetings is designed to be flexible. The agenda often includes a presentation on some specific ministry topic or issue or a review of an Annual Conference Statement. Individual sharing always takes place and receives high priority, as it is the most fruitful basis for ministerial skill development in specific situations.

Students are required to participate in ministry formation events that vary according to their district; the participating districts have policies unique to their plan for ministers in training.

### Leadership

The **coordinator** of the ministry formation group should be an ordained minister appointed by the District Ministry Commission. The coordinator is responsible for being present with the participants at the meetings, guiding discussions on ministry topics, being willing to share from experience in ministry, and planning meetings/topics so that the list of basic objectives for ministry formation are met.

Another person who holds a crucial role for the minister in training is the **district appointed counselor/mentor**. The counselor/mentor is encouraged to develop a warm,

open and friendly relationship with the student so that the student feels the freedom to share concerns, problems, or the joys of exploring and adjusting to ministry. The counselor/mentor will provide encouragement, guidance, and prayer support for the student's education and ministry exploration.

Students are encouraged to realize that the **District Executives and District Ministry Commissions** are resources for them.

### **Basic Objectives for Ministry Formation**

Through participation in a Ministry Formation group, students will:

- Articulate an understanding of the call to ministry, including
  - Developing self-awareness of the call to ministry
  - Pursuing servanthood for Christ
  - Exploring biblical integration with practical ministry
  - Naming what being a pastor in the Church of the Brethren means
  - understand stewardship of gifts, abilities, finances, time, creation and life
  - understand and practice ethical behavior
- Develop skills in practical ministry experience, including
  - hospital/nursing home visitation
  - home visits
  - premarital counseling
  - wedding preparation and officiating
  - funeral preparation and officiating
  - anointing
  - baptism
  - communion
  - Love Feast
- Develop skills in church administration, such as
  - leading meetings
  - conflict resolution
  - record keeping
  - develop a stewardship campaign
- Articulate an understanding of the need for self-care, including
  - time management
  - spiritual renewal
  - life-long learning
  - Sabbath rest
- Develop an ongoing plan for prayer and spiritual growth focused on
  - understand prayer as both personal and corporate
  - be aware of various spiritual disciplines
  - develop the habit of keeping a spiritual journal
  - be aware of important source books on prayer
- Become aware of community resources for

- counseling
- health care
- social service assistance
- youth services

These objectives will be achieved through personal experience, group sharing, and guest presenters on the topic. Each district ministry formation group is encouraged to invite experienced ministers to share with the group. Experienced ministers will bring a richness of practical advice from which students may learn.

### **Meeting Schedule**

Six two-hour meetings per year are suggested although districts can design the model which best fits the district.

### **Attendance Policy**

While individual districts may have attendance policies, the following policy is suggested:

First absence—student notifies the Ministry Formation Coordinator and completes make-up assignment on topics discussed.

Second absence—student notifies the Ministry Formation Coordinator and the Chair of Ministry Commission and completes make-up assignment on topics discussed.

Third absence—Ministry Formation Coordinator refers to District Ministry Commission and discussion on student's desire for re-licensing and/or continuation in educational program.

## **STUDENTS' PROGRESS**

The Executive Director of SVMC will read all instructor and class evaluations at the end of each course. Where there are problems in the class, the instructor will report these to the Executive Director upon which remedial action will be taken.

Instructors will evaluate the students' performance in their class. The instructor will clearly define expectations and projects as the course begins. Each course should include the basic objectives printed in this Learning Plan. These basic objectives help to meet the Readiness for Ministry criteria. The students will have individual conversations with the instructor regarding the theme of the project/paper/plan that will be the major determinant in measuring performance.

A more detailed guide for instructors to use in evaluation is included in the Evaluative Plan.

Students will be in frequent contact with counselor/mentor assigned by their district. Counselor/mentors can help students evaluate personal progress and consider challenges in the process. Students are encouraged to work to their fullest potential and their work will be monitored yearly by the Executive Director.

## **SUPERVISED MINISTRY EXPERIENCE**

An intricate part of the educational plan is the supervised ministry training experience. Paired with an experienced minister, students will have opportunities to explore and experience the daily needs and challenges of doing ministry. Ideally, the supervised ministry experience will be an action and reflection model supplementing the learning occurring through the study units. The Supervised Ministry experience will commence at some point during the second year of the educational program. The setting could be congregational, a chaplaincy, or another setting as negotiated within/by the district.

### **Basic Objectives for Supervised Ministry**

Through participation in Supervised Ministry, students will:

- Discern the way their personality lends itself to and shapes relationships in ministry
- Engage in opportunities for practical application and enhancement of skills theoretically studied in courses
- Develop a personal pattern of time management for effective ministry
- Receive reflective counsel and evaluation from the mentoring pastor and district staff
- Develop and practice ministerial ethics in all relationships

### **Experience Design**

Leadership:

- The District Ministry Commission, in consultation with the staff of SVMC, will appoint a District Coordinator of ACTS Level Supervised Ministry. This Coordinator will be responsible for administration, teaming of students with supervisors, and act as a liaison between district and SVMC staff.
- The Coordinator, in consultation with the District Executive, will arrange for settings in which supervised ministry can take place and provide for the assignment of supervisors.

While each district has its unique plan for supervised ministry experience, the program will include for each student:

- Teaming with a supervisor with at least 5 years positive experience in the field of ministry for which the student is preparing
- One year (approximately 200-400 hours) of opportunities mutually agreed upon by the supervisor and the student
- Weekly journal keeping and evaluative reporting to the supervisor each quarter. Each quarter will include a report on the following areas:
  - Preaching
  - Worship leading
  - Pastoral care situation
  - Teaching and working with small groups
  - Administrative meeting setting
  - On-going discussion of spiritual dynamics of spiritual life and ministry

The experienced minister will be aware of the need to include and will demonstrate a willingness/mindfulness in include the student in many ministry opportunities throughout the year. Hospital visits, nursing home visits, home visits, anointing, communion, Love Feast preparation, funeral preparation, wedding preparation, meeting leadership, teaching, preaching, and worship leading are all areas the student will experience throughout the year.

At the completion of the year of supervised experience, through review of the experiences and reflections, the supervisor and the district will grant satisfactory completion or recommend the need for additional supervised experience by flagging some skill areas which need more work. A report from the supervisor and a reflection paper from the student will be included in the student's records.

### **Guidelines for Supervision**

Supervisors should:

1. Exhibit attitudes of genuine caring and vocation to the nurturing of new ministers
  - Listen to what a student is saying and feeling so that the student feels affirmed rather than controlled
  - Help a student to express dreams, clarify goals, and specify objectives for a ministering activity
  - Help a student analyze conditions and find procedures that are appropriate to the specified objectives
  - Help a student be reality-oriented about people, time, places, resources and other arrangements
  - Help a student identify and work through obstacles that arise in practice
  - Help a student honestly evaluate what has been done in terms of objectives, personal performance, and larger significance
  - Find an appropriate way of celebrating the gains and mourning the losses with the student

2. Remember God is not finished with the minister in training yet; expect growth and maturity with future experience
3. Not attempt to make the student into their own image and likeness
4. Be sensitive and compassionate while being firm and not afraid to voice constructive criticism.
5. Cherish and promote a sense of humor<sup>vi</sup>

## **BRETHREN BIBLE INSTITUTE**

Persons in self-supporting ministry may be granted credit for courses taken at the annual Brethren Bible Institute at Elizabethtown College. The Brethren Bible Institute is supported by the Brethren Revival Fellowship. SVMC will accept up to six courses taken through BBI at fifteen contact hours per course. The students must provide documentation of completed course to the Executive Director of SVMC.

### **Expectations of Student Work**

Established by the Ministry Advisory Council as a standard for all Ministry training programs in the Church of the Brethren<sup>vii</sup>

- fifteen contact hours
- Total class time, reading, and project work should total 75-90 hours
- 400-500 pages of reading material; each course will have reading which includes a required text(s) plus assigned supplemental reading to adequately cover the subject area.
- One or more major assignments/projects will be required. Assignments could be a comparative book review, research paper, interviews, pastoral conversations, sermons, or teaching outlines. Assignments integrating reading or research with the student's ministry are especially desirable
- Use measurable ways of evaluating work done: written projects, tests, congregational feedback instruments, taped sermons, in addition to classroom discussions and conversations between student and supervisor

## **Evaluative Process**

ACTS classes are graded as credit or non-credit.

### **Student Participation**

Evaluate how the student participated in class:

- How was the student's class attendance?
- Did the student participate in class discussions?
- Did the student complete assignments on time and in a quality manner?

### **Student Projects**

Evaluate the completed projects:

- Were the projects completed on time?
- Did the completed projects meet the objectives of the assignment?
- Has the student demonstrated progress on the Readiness for Ministry criteria listed for your course?
- Does the student demonstrate a quality understanding of the writing process? (e.g. spelling, grammar, punctuation, footnoting, bibliography)

## **Readiness for Ministry Criteria**

(pages 230.6-230.9 Ministerial Leadership Manual)

The following list is from the *Readiness for Ministry Criteria* and is suggested as important to integrate as ACTS are designed and taught.

- Familiarity with the biblical sources of the Christian community and competency in interpreting those sources
- Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically on the history and social context of Christianity
- Awareness of the contextual character of particular Christian traditions, especially found in the North American setting and in global settings of developing Christianity
- Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically on the heritage of the believers' church tradition
- Ability to articulate faith in language that is theologically informed and culturally persuasive
- An understanding of the congregation informed by both theological heritage and learnings from the human sciences
- Ability to articulate a vision of ministry congruent with one's sense of vocation and appropriate to the ministry context in which that vocation will be practiced
- Ability to nurture and reflect critically on the spiritual formation of self and others, including ethics for ministry and life in community
- Skills in interpersonal relationships, in mediating conflict, and in building community
- Ability to provide effective leadership in congregational and other church-related arenas of ministry
- Ability to integrate biblical and theological understandings with the practice of ministry

**Supervised Ministry Experience Contract**  
**Academy Certified Training System (ACTS)**

Student:

Supervisor:

Ministry Experience Setting:

Time Frame:

Describe ways student will be involved in ministry:  
*(can be typed on another sheet of paper and attached)*

Describe ways supervisor will be involved:  
*(can be typed on another sheet of paper and attached)*

Student signature:

Date:

Supervisor signature:

Date:

January 9, 2003

**Supervised Ministry Event Form**  
**ACTS**  
(One event per form)

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Event:

Preaching \_\_\_\_\_ Worship Leading \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Care \_\_\_\_\_ Administrative meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching/Small Group \_\_\_\_\_

*(description, reflection and response can be typed on another paper and attached to this form)*

Description of Event: *(include topic/issue, your objectives, resources used, what occurred in the event)*

Student Reflection: *(describe your reaction to the event; how was it received by the people; were your objectives met; what did you learn, what would you do differently)*

Supervisor's Response

Date Form Completed

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist for Supervised Ministry Experience ACTS

Date Completed (Event occurred & forms complete)

<b>Preaching</b>				
<b>Worship Leading</b>				
<b>Pastoral Care</b>				
<b>Administrative Meeting</b>				
<b>Teaching/ Small Group</b>				

## **Completion of Supervised Ministry ACTS**

Student Evaluation of Experience:  
*(can be typed on another sheet of paper and attached)*

Supervisor Evaluation of Experience:  
*(can be typed on another sheet of paper and attached)*

Student Signature:

Date:

Supervisor Signature:

Date:

January 9, 2003

**Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center  
ACTS Program Completion  
Evaluation by Student**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Your evaluation of the educational program you completed is valuable input for the ACTS on-going process of self-evaluation. Through this evaluation, we can consider how we are meeting our goal of providing ministry training. Thank you for completing this important evaluation. You can type your answers on another sheet of paper, if that is helpful to you.*

How did the learning opportunities help prepare you for ministry? What worked? What didn't work?

Evaluate how the learning opportunities helped you develop or strengthen the criteria for Readiness for Ministry.

What changes could be made to strengthen the educational program?

# ACTS CHECKOFF

Name \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

**Biblical (3)**

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	LOCATION	CREDIT
Old Testament			
New Testament			
Interpreting the Bible			

**Historical/Theological (3)**

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	LOCATION	CREDIT
History of the Church			
Brethren Life & Thought			
Theology			

**Ministry Skills (5)**

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	LOCATION	CREDIT
Church Leadership & Adm. (required)			
Introduction to Pastoral Care			
Teaching & Learning in the Church			
Preaching			
Worship			
Church Vitality & Evangelism			
Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry			

**Elective (1)**

COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	LOCATION	CREDIT

ANNUAL CONFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT CONFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTRY FORMATION GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

Date entered \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitator \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISED MINISTRY TRAINING \_\_\_\_\_

Date began \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date of ACTS completion \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>i</sup> Ministerial Leadership Manual. Church of the Brethren, page AC 10.7, III.B.3d.

<sup>ii</sup> Scripture list from Readiness for Ministry paper in Ministerial Leadership notebook. OM 230.1-2

<sup>iii</sup> The list has been reordered to loosely represent the progression of new life, growth, commitment, community, and sending.

<sup>iv</sup> *Spiritual Classics*. Edited by Richard Foster and Emilie Griffin. HarperSanFrancisco, 2000, p. xiii & xiv.

<sup>v</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vi</sup> Adapted from Middle PA District Academy Level Supervised Ministry Experience document