Master of Divinity: Pastoral Ministries Specialization

This specialization is intended for students who feel called into full-time pastoral ministry. Students will create a ministry philosophy that is biblically and theologically sound, reflecting personal and cultural awareness. Through coursework and residencies, students will demonstrate skills in the daily tasks of church ministry: preaching sermons, serving people, leading groups, and developing curriculum. At the end of the program, students will have an understanding of how their unique gifts and abilities relate to vocational ministry.

MIN-530 Pastoral Competencies 3 credits

This course provides for the pastoral specialization an introduction to the broad range of skills that a pastor must develop in the everyday work of the ministry. This includes the administration of ordinances, conducting weddings and funerals, caring for the sick and grief stricken, ministerial ethics, church service development, a preaching calendar, knowledge of the annual liturgical calendar and church life, financial integrity in one's personal life, church staff and officers development, cultivating life habits of professional development and song leading capacity, along with numerous timeless items that contribute to the science and art of pastoral ministry. The student will have contact with regional pastors in the acquisition of these skills and attitudes.

MIN-636 Homiletics I 3 credits

An introduction to homiletics with attention to philosophy and purpose. Emphasis is given to study of available methods for gathering the biblical and non-biblical materials needed for sermons. The course includes a laboratory that allows basic instruction and evaluation regarding the student's communication style in the homiletical situation.

MIN-637 Homiletics II 3 credits

A concentrated study of the organization of sermonic material with emphasis given to its application in expository preaching. Various types of expository sermons are examined and attention is given to responsibilities related to the pulpit ministry. The laboratory allows instruction in and application of a variety of delivery techniques.
MIN-685 Ministry Residency I  2 credits

The first course of four designed for the MR (ministry residency). The student will get acquainted with their specific ministry culture. Through the student’s ministry, interaction with their mentor, contact with other MR residents, and their own personal reflection, the student will lay a foundation for their journey in a ministry context while gaining feedback that will help them in preparation for ministry. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to articulate goals for personal growth and ministry competency; track and evaluate their time management; establish the discipline of journaling and reflection; apply regular feedback and guidance given from their mentor; and be relationally connected with their ministry context as they invest time and relational energy, establishing relationships and rapport.

MIN-686 Ministry Residency II  2 credits

The second course of four designed for the MR (ministry residency). This course builds upon the competency goals defined in MIN-686 and begins to explore ministry topics that pertain to small group dynamics, working with elders/boards, pastoral duties (leading communion), strategic planning and staff meetings. Upon successful completion of this course students will gain experience leading/facilitating a small group; become familiar with leading communion/a communion service; establish a ministry initiative and strategic plan for implementation; grow in interacting with staff members; and gain experience attending board/elders meetings.

MIN-781 Ministry Residency III  2 credits

The third course of four designed for the MR (ministry residency). This course builds upon the competency goals of the previous two courses and attempts to extend ministry experience into areas of classroom teaching, board/elders meetings, pastoral duties (weddings), implementing a ministry initiative, leadership and pastoral counseling. Upon successful completion of this semester of residency, students will become familiar with preparing for and officiating a wedding; implementing a ministry initiative and strategic plan; learn to recruit, shepherd, and lead a team of volunteers serving their ministry initiative, and navigate pastoral counseling concepts and strategies.
MIN-782 Ministry Residency IV 2 credits

The fourth course of four designed for the MR (ministry residency). This course builds upon the competency goals of the MIN-781 and brings completion to the student’s residency experience. The student's final semester as a MR resident will focus in areas of personal solitude (through a one-day retreat), preaching, pastoral duties (funerals, dedications/baptisms), assessing and leading a developed ministry initiative, leadership development, “on call” counseling and referrals, gift assessment and strength finder, and summary evaluation of one’s calling and next steps beyond formal ministry training. Upon successful completion of this course, the student will gain experience through preaching opportunities and receive feedback; prepare for and, if the occasion arises, lead a funeral service; prepare for and lead a baptism/dedication service; evaluate their ministry initiative and strategic plan and determine its next steps; evaluate and assess their spiritual gifts and leadership strengths; and intentionally schedule, plan and implement a personal, one-day retreat.