



Sustaining the Vocational Discernment of Young Adults through IMMERSION GRANTS

What is PROJECT CONNECT: Calling Leaders for a Changing World?

Project Connect: Calling Leaders for a Changing World, is an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (Philadelphia, Gettysburg, and Southern). These seminaries are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Project Connect is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The purpose of Project Connect is to organize an enthusiastic network of church leaders to mentor and provide theologically sound vocational discernment programs for young adults.

This endeavor will be accomplished by **identifying** young adults who are active in church life; **nurturing** relationships with those who are open to a process that extends, deepens, and provides focus for vocational discernment; and **sustaining** these relationships by providing profound experiences in congregational ministry.

IMMERSIONS

What are IMMERSIONS?

Immersion provide for theological exploration in the midst of deep congregational engagement which will combine to deepen discernment and test a call to pastoral ministry.

For who are IMMERSIONS intended?

To apply for participation in an Immersion, you should be a young adult who is considering ministry as a career (although it isn't necessary to have fully decided). It is required that you have completed at least one academic year of full time study at an accredited college or university and under the age of 30 by May 31 of the year for which you are applying. The successful applicant will demonstrate openness to growth in faith, passion, integrity, vision, self-awareness and motivation for a lifetime of service as pastors and in other forms of public ministry.

Who designs IMMERSIONS?

Immersion is designed by the young adult and pastor of the congregation in consultation with the congregation council. Details of the Immersion will be delineated in a letter signed by the young adult, the pastor, and a representative of the congregation council.

What are the important characteristics of an IMMERSION?

- The arena for an Immersion is the congregation, preferably not the student's home congregation. Please contact Don Johnson, director of Project Connect, if you need guidance in locating a congregation.
- The pastor of the congregation will serve as a mentor and be willing to share his or her own call stories and experiences in ministry.
- Immersions take place either full-time (40 hours per week for 10 weeks) in the summer / or part-time (12 hours per week for eight months) during the academic year.
- Congregations will typically share in providing a stipend to the student, provide housing, make provisions for travel, and offer support and encouragement.
- Recipients of Immersions will agree to abide by the ELCA's *Vision and Expectations* statement for Associates in Ministry (see the LEADERS tab of the Project Connect website).

What kinds of experiences are included in IMMERSIONS?

Congregations and their pastors are expected to provide exposure to various aspects of pastoral ministry such as:

- Visitation of sick and homebound members.
 - Administration, including council and committee meetings.
 - Study and preparation for worship leadership and preaching.
 - Experience with a broad range of age-specific ministries.
 - Exposure to social ministry organizations and community groups.
 - Exposure to synods, including face-to-face conversations with key leaders.
 - Exposure to and involvement with cross-cultural communities.
 - Spiritual formation.
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What is included in an IMMERSION stipend?

Stipends of up to \$3,000 will be awarded for each of 15 Immersion experiences during the year 2011

ORIENTATION

The student and pastor will be expected to attend a gathering with other Immersion students and pastors, prior to the beginning of the Immersion, providing orientation, peer interaction, and team-building. Project Connect will cover the costs of room, board, and program during the event as well as travel expenses. In 2011, students

and supervising pastors will be expected to participate in the orientation scheduled for May 24-25 at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC

How and when to apply for IMMERSIONS:

Applications are available from the Project Connect office and can also be downloaded from the GRANTS section of the Project Connect website, www.projectconnect.org .

Project Connect
665 Eaton Road
Freedom, NH 03836

For more information please contact Don Johnson, Project Director, at the address shown or don@projectconnect.org 603-539-7257 (office) 603-848-9904 (cell)

First Application Deadline: February 1, 2011

Applicants will be informed of the status of their applications in letters postmarked no later than February 19.

Applications for Immersions will include:

1. Application Form
2. Resume
3. Three-page personal essay
4. Academic Letter of Reference with signed waiver
5. Ministry Letter of Reference with signed waiver
6. Description of project, signed by applicant, pastor, and congregation council

Second Application Deadline: April 10, 2011

If Immersion grants are still available after the February 1 deadline, applications received by April 10 will be considered. Applicants considered at this time will be notified of the status of their applications in letters postmarked by April 30.
