Preaching Opportunities, Evaluations and Compensation
Distance Education Students

Guidelines for Guest Preachers providing pulpit supply

Prior to the service, communicate and plan well.
Aim to learn what the church’s worship services are normally like, look at their standard order of service or ask to see the service of the previous week(s), as you make your selections. Follow the church’s established order of worship and other conventions observed by the church. They need to know from you what your Scripture, text, sermon, and theme are at least a week ahead of time.

Be sensitive to local conventions.
Since you are entering their community, you will need to abide by their customs. A conversation ahead of time will give you the opportunity to discover matters such as: what are they accustomed to in sermon length? What is the proper attire - robe, suit, sport coat, dress, slacks, casual? Observe generally accepted standards of good dress and grooming in the pulpit. Which Bible translation do they use? Do they have any special practices that are uniquely theirs that you should be aware of? What type of microphone will you be using? Who meets together before the service and where? What time should you be there?

Review the liturgy when planning for your participation and on the day of service.
A conversation with the pastor, an elder, musician, or other worship leader will be very helpful to all. How much of the service do you lead? Are the songs announced? Are they projected or do worshipers use hymnals? What special needs should be included in the congregational/pastoral prayer? How is the offering handled? Should you greet worshipers at the close of the service? Where? Are there any other special instructions you should be aware of? Be present early enough so all discussions about the service can be completed before the time for the prayer before the service. Follow established order of worship and other conventions observed by the church.

Arrive early on the day of service.
Where is the church? Obtain accurate directions to the church. What is the best route from your home? How long will it take? What time do their services start? How much ahead of time would they like you to be there? How much ahead of time should you leave your home? Leaders get very nervous if guest preachers arrive too late. It is most courteous to arrive at least 30 minutes before the service begins.

Make arrangements for preaching evaluations.
Remember that sermons are to be evaluated by a representative sampling of members of the congregation. See the following section in this document for complete information re. obtaining preaching evaluations.

Be an Ambassador.
When you serve as a guest preacher, you clearly are a representative of Calvin Seminary. Be cordial and show interest in the other persons who meet with you. Learn their names, their role of service, and introduce yourself to them if they are hesitant to do so with you. Get acquainted with and express gratitude to the person who serves as your host. Briefly, introduce yourself at an appropriate time in the service. It is fitting to bring greetings to the local congregation from the Seminary community. An expression of thanks from the Seminary will be meaningful to churches that have been supporting the Seminary with their prayers and gifts for many years.

1. Access to Preaching Opportunities: Students licensed through the CRC Candidacy Committee have a denomination-wide license to preach. The following suggestions are ways you may want to alert Christian Reformed churches regarding your availability to preach.
a. Write a letter to your home church and classis and/or to the stated clerks of the Classes within a reasonable distance of where you are living. Introduce yourself, including information about your progress in your seminary program. Indicate that you are interested in and willing to serve churches in the classis as pulpit supply. Request that stated clerks provide your contact information to the churches
of the classis.

b. Write letters to the councils of the churches that are within a reasonable distance of where you live and make known your availability to preach along with your contact information.

c. Through personal contacts with area CRC pastors and church members indicate your willingness and desire to provide pulpit supply to churches in the vicinity of your home.

d. Request preaching opportunities in internships in which you are completing Mentored Ministries requirements.

2. **Access to Preaching Opportunities while at CTS for Intensive**
   
a. The MMO office receives pulpit supply requests from churches within a 300 mile radius of CTS. These requests may be for the morning and/or evening worship services. In many cases, pulpit supply also entails leading part or all of the worship service.
   
   
c. When a student is interested in accepting a listed preaching opportunity, the student should e-mail the MMO Administrative Coordinator (AC) at mentoredministries@calvinseminary.edu as soon as possible.
   
d. The AC will notify the designated contact person from the church to give them the student’s name, phone number and e-mail address. Someone from the church will contact the student to request worship service and sermon information.
   
e. Students may accept preaching opportunities directly offered to them by churches. In these cases, students are responsible for communicating with the church to exchange information, make any necessary arrangements, convey remuneration information, etc.

3. **Number of required preaching evaluations**
   
a. M.Div. students are required to have preaching evaluations completed on six different sermons.
   
b. Students are to use the CTS preaching evaluation forms. These forms are available from the CTS Mentored Ministries Office (MMO). The form may also be downloaded from the CTS Pulpit Supply website [http://www.calvinseminary.edu/pulpitSupply/sermonEvaluationForm.pdf](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/pulpitSupply/sermonEvaluationForm.pdf).
   
c. These evaluations are to be completed by members of the congregations in which the sermon is preached.
   
d. **At least two evaluations** per sermon must be received by the MMO in order for it to count as an evaluated sermon.
   
e. Evaluations must come from at least five different congregations. However, if the student is in an internship and/or is committed to serving in a particular setting, three of the six evaluations may come from this setting.

4. **Steps to follow for completing of preaching evaluations**
   
a. When preaching a sermon that the student wants to have evaluated, the student should bring along an adequate number (4 or 5) of preaching evaluation forms.
      ➢ when using the downloaded form, the student should arrange of the completed evaluations to be given to their vocational mentor
   
b. Preaching evaluation forms should be distributed randomly to a relatively representative sample of members in the congregation.
   
c. Request assistance for the distribution of the preaching evaluation forms. (If this assignment has been arranged through the MMO, a request has been made for the church to designate a person to assist the student in distributing these forms.) If you cannot find anyone to assist you, ask the person who prays with you before the service to take responsibility for distributing forms to members of the congregation.
   
d. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that an adequate number of preaching evaluation forms are distributed at each service. If a sermon is to count as an evaluated sermon, **at least two evaluations** must be received by Vocational Mentor.

5. **Processing of and Credit for completed preaching evaluations**
   
a. The student’s vocational mentor reviews the evaluations, makes any notes to attach to the evaluation, and forwards the evaluations to the student.
b. The student reviews the evaluations, follows up on actions requested by the vocational mentor, and returns the evaluations to the vocational mentor.

   c. The vocational mentor maintains a file and record of completed evaluations.

   d. When the student has completed the first set of three preaching evaluations, the vocational mentor will notify the MMO that this has been completed and will do the same with the second set of three.

6. **Payment for Preaching**

   a. Students will receive payment for preaching directly from the church. When the student accepts a preaching assignment through the MMO, a confirmation letter will be sent to the church that includes the student’s contact information and a statement of the amount that should be paid to the student.

   b. Students will receive a minimum of $85.00 per service (per CTS guidelines).

   c. Canadian churches pay for pulpit supply and mileage according to rates set by their classis.

   d. When students and churches make their own arrangements for pulpit supply, CTS guidelines may be referenced, but payment for preaching, mileage, etc. will be a matter agreed upon by the student and the church.

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