Guide for Developing a Learning Covenant

What is a Learning Covenant?
The Learning Covenant describes a three-way relationship between the student, supervisor/mentor, and the Office of Supervised Ministries. In Commonwealth and Covenant, Marcia Pally points out that a covenant is something like a Mobius strip in that “covenant...is a relationship of reciprocal concern, the commitment by each to give for the flourishing of the other, generously, not quid pro quo.” It is choosing to join together in mutual commitment, pursuits, responsibilities, concern for the other, and accepting the gift of consideration (advice, support) in return. (pp. 155-157) Making covenant means committing to reciprocal consideration-worthiness, reciprocal regard, and responsibility among persons.

Why Learning Covenants?
• They help us take responsibility for the direction and progress of the learning process.
• They allow us freedom to bring our whole selves into expression through our unique gifts and values guiding the shape of our practice.
• They provide other people with a meaningful guide in supporting our learning, thereby encouraging collegiality and a sense of joining each other in a learning relationship.
• They clarify and challenge our commitment to learning.

As you construct your learning covenant, consider these things:

What motivates learning?
• Hope
  o What would I be like if I were fulfilling my hopes? (Professional/Personal/Vocational characteristics)
  o What do I/others most enjoy about me that can be strengthened and used?
  o What hopes or dreams have brought me to this point? Are they still valid?
• Inquiry
  o What am I curious about?
  o What do I need to know to be engaged in leadership?
  o What resources are available to me while in my field of interest?
  o What do I already know that can be a resource to my development of pastoral (or ministerial) identity and authority?
• Discomfort
  o In what situations do I commonly struggle?
  o In what ways do I feel incomplete?
  o What behaviors commonly get me into trouble? How can I change them?
  o What hurts in my life? What does that say to me?
  o How do I want to be and act differently in three months?

How does learning involve my whole self?
• Intellectual
  o What information, theories, concepts, do I want to know?
  o What competencies do I need to carry out certain tasks, understand and apply theories, and utilize knowledge and attitudes in a variety of situations?
  o What areas of professional and/or pastoral skills would I like to strengthen?
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- **Interpersonal**
  - What abilities do I have that enable me to relate effectively and connect with others within the context and expectations of a particular setting or environment? What abilities do I desire?
  - In what ways would I like to improve the way I relate with others?

- **Intrapersonal**
  - How would I like to use my experience, creativity and imagination?
  - How do I demonstrate/convey a sense of professional maturity and perspective?
  - What values or sense of meaning and purpose are important to me?
  - What personal attributes would I like to continue, change or strengthen?