

Education for Ministry Annual Report
January 21, 2025

Greetings from the Education for Ministry Program here at St. Michael and All Angels!

We are excited to share what happened in 2024 and our plans for 2025.



Shown left to right: Diane McKay, Riley Huston, Justin Price, Connie Gould, Belinda Bryant, Teresa Neudecker, Cap Rogers, and Sharon DeLand. Not shown: Michiel Bourdrez (behind the camera!)

“EfM invites the people of God to discern and act in faith through small group reflection”¹

Education for Ministry is a four-year program of spiritual formation designed and supported by the School of Theology at the University of the South at Sewanee. Local mentors lead one or more small groups in study and reflection on scripture, tradition, theology and ethics. Through reflection exercises, both private and shared, participants are encouraged to apply their faith and beliefs in their own lives and to current issues ranging from local to global crises. We have seen positive impacts of this program in the lives and actions of participants here at St. Michael’s.

¹ <https://theology.sewanee.edu/education-for-ministry/>

Education for Ministry at St. Michael's in 2024

In late 2023, Michiel Bourdrez, Sharon DeLand, and Justin Price took on organizing and leading the Education for Ministry program at St. Michael's after our previous mentor, Camille Flores, was called on to other opportunities. The 2024 cohort began in January of 2024 and ended in October 2024. Connie Gould, Belinda Bryant, Cap Rogers, and Justin Price completed the first year (the Hebrew Bible) and Diane McKay and Teresa Neudecker completed studies of the New Testament. Our supplementary texts were *Beyond a Binary God*—Rev. Tara Soughers' development of a theology for trans allies—and *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*—James H. Cone's powerful meditation on the relationship of lynching and the Cross in Black history and their meaning today. We were fortunate to arrange a Zoom conversation with Rev. Soughers (currently rector in Silver City) after reading her book.

Education for Ministry at St. Michael's in 2025

We are pleased to report that our 2025 cohort had its first session on January 20. Riley Huston is joining us for the first year of study focused on the Hebrew Bible. Connie Gould, Belinda Bryant, Cap Rogers, and Justin Price are studying the New Testament, while Diane McKay and Teresa Neudecker are exploring Christian history and tradition. This will be the first time in recent years that we have had students in three different years meeting together and we are looking forward to how these different perspectives will enrich our conversations and community. We are still interested in building offerings for the Diocese and are excited to have Rev. Simone Drinkwater join the staff with her extensive experience with the EfM program and as the Diocesan representative for EfM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Bourdrez, Sharon DeLand, and Justin Price