

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY (EFM)

Every baptized person is called to ministry. The Education for Ministry (EFM) program, under the auspices of the University of the South, located in Sewanee, Tennessee, provides people with the education and small group dynamics to discern and carry out that ministry. Lay persons face the difficult and often subtle task of interpreting the richness of the Episcopal Church's faith in a complex and confusing world. They need the kind of theological education which supports their faith and which also trains them to express that faith in day-to-day events. Many people think that one must be ordained in order to be "*a minister*". The fact is that all baptized Christians are called to be active participants in the church's total ministry. The EFM program is preparation for the ministry to which we are called. It is that vocation for which we pray at the end of the Eucharist: "*And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord*".

The **seminar** group is the nucleus of the Education for Ministry program. A group consists of six to eleven students, and trained mentor(s) meeting weekly over the course of the nine-month academic year (September – May). Beginning on September 21, 2011, eight (8) parishioners (Mary Lou Fowler / Wayne Fowler / Mark Jasmine / Phyllis Kombol / Barb Lewis / Charles Simmons / Gina Simmons / Dorothy Trammell) and two (2) trained mentors (Sue Gelarden / Dave Millar) began their four-year journey. The weekly meetings last from 150–180 minutes, and our All Saints' EFM group meets promptly at the church at 5:00PM, for an hour consisting of on-board or check-in, followed by discussion of our weekly study assignment. After the 6:00PM supper break, the seminar group reconvenes for the final ninety (90) minutes of small group dynamics and worship. Each Wednesday, we conclude promptly at 8:15PM.

Through study, prayer, and reflection, the EFM group moves toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. Christian tradition and collective experience are linked by the seminar sessions, where life and study meet. The group is grounded by regular worship which is so vital to the life of the group.

Students are given weekly lesson assignments to study with the help of resource guides and the internet. Students are responsible for setting their own learning goals. You would typically spend between two and four hours in study and preparation each week. During the seminar sessions, students have the opportunity to share their insights and discoveries as well as to raise and discuss questions which the study materials might pose for them. Through discussion and guided reflection, the seminars furnish an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of the reading materials. In addition, students learn to think theologically through the development of skills learned in a method called theological reflection. By examining their own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and tradition of our Christian faith, students can learn what it means to be effective ministers in the world. Finally, the seminar is supported by a life of prayer and regular worship, either developed on your own or through liturgical materials furnished with the course materials.

Seminar groups work under the leadership of mentor(s) who contract to serve as guides and administrators. Mentors may be lay or ordained persons. Sue Gelarden and Dave Millar, both past graduates of EFM, have accepted the call to be mentors for the All Saints' group. You also have the support and encouragement of Rev. Nancy Cox, who also has been a past EFM mentor. The tuition for one academic year or cycle in a sponsoring diocese, of which NC is, totals \$350.00, to be paid in full before the beginning of the academic year. To assist students with financial needs, a tuition reduction provision is available on the basis of the total enrollment of the group or available discretionary funds.

If any parishioner is considering joining EFM in September of 2012, please contact Sue or Dave. Hopefully, there will be a couple of opportunities in the spring of 2012 to participate in information sessions, possibly during the Sunday morning education hour. But, the best way to learn and know more about EFM is to personally contact any one of our eight "students" for some one-on-one sharing time, or contact Sue, Dave, or Nancy for additional information.