

Education for Ministry (EfM) Report
Marti Fagley, Diocesan Coordinator
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EfM is a four-year distance-learning program in theological education from the School of Theology at the University of the South.

The seminar group is the nucleus of the Education for Ministry program. A group consists of six to twelve participants and a trained mentor who meet weekly over the course of a nine-month academic year. These meetings are usually from two and a half to three hours in length. Through **study, prayer, and reflection**, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. This process can be illustrated by a two-rail fence. One rail is the Christian tradition. The other is the collective experience of the group's members. The rails are linked by fence posts representing the seminar sessions and group practice of theological reflection where life and study meet. The fence is grounded in the soil of regular worship that is vital to the life of the group. Through discussion and guided reflection, the seminars furnish an opportunity to deepen the understanding of the weekly reading materials and resource guides. The seminar is supported by a life of prayer and regular worship.

Mentors must attend a training session and be accredited. Mentor training is available in Sewanee, in the dioceses under contract to EfM, and by special arrangements. The period of accreditation for a mentor is eighteen months. Mentors must renew their accreditation by attending training to remain active. Only accredited mentors may enroll students for EfM groups. After mentors have completed their second training experience, mentor formation sessions provide new areas of growth and expertise for experienced mentors.

Our Diocese graduated five people at a Eucharist and dinner held at St. Lukes-in-the-Meadow on June 1, 2013. This was our second graduating class in the past two years. The service was officiated by Rt. Rev. Rayford High. Certificates of Completion were awarded to

*Brother David Carpenter
Frances Pieters
Priscilla Promise
Gary Wilson
Shirley Parker*

We are very proud of the work each of these graduates has done and offer our congratulations.

In May an EfM group meeting at St. Luke's-in-the-Meadow disbanded. After graduating four members, remaining members were incorporated into other groups around the diocese and one member elected to attend a group led by Elizabeth Lang in the Diocese of Dallas. For many years, Elizabeth Lang mentored many from our diocese when EfM was not offered here. We currently have four active EfM groups.

1. St. Stephens, Hurst, Deacon Tracie Middleton, Mentor

There are eleven students in our group (representing all four years of the program), and one mentor; that's up from eight students last year, when we re-started after a year's hiatus.

We meet Saturday mornings, and the location varies: often at Panera but also at different people's homes. If St. Stephen's were able to secure a facility that the church could access during the week, it would greatly benefit our group, so I keep hoping that one of our many attempts at finding some kind of settled space will succeed—soon!

I went to mentor training this year in Wewoka, OK, which was great; I met lots of new people, including two of the authors of the new reading and reflection guides—who have both been instrumental in the EfM material all the way through and have mentored groups for years and years. A great deal of work went into designing the new material and testing it out through pilot groups, etc. I really appreciated hearing some of that planning and design process.

Last year when we were studying the ecumenical councils (3rd year), we visited St. Basil's Byzantine Catholic Church (Eastern Rite) in Irving: <http://www.stbasilsinirving.org/>. Our group joined them for a service of morning prayer on a Saturday morning in the spring, and afterwards one of the lay members gave us a wonderful tour, explaining iconography and why the ecumenical council related to icons is so significant to eastern churches. The priest also spoke to us about the icons in the church and invited us back for Good Friday services and a potluck. Since we couldn't have Good Friday services at the wedding chapel, some of our members did go (we were also invited to St. Alban's and St. Martin-in-the-Fields, so we were not lacking opportunities!), and it was a fascinating and moving experience. The members of the group felt that they gained a wider understanding of how Christianity is expressed in different traditions, and they also said they had a better appreciation for their own Episcopal traditions, seeing how some of those connect to other traditions and how they differ. Several of the EfM class members attended, along with spouses and other members of the church. It was a very fruitful and enjoyable experience.

2. *St. Martins-in-the-Field, Keller, Rev. Judy Upham, Mentor*

The EfM group meeting at St. Martin's, Keller, on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. has six members and one mentor. I attended my last training at Camp Allen in July of 2013. This is the first year for this group that began in October.

3. *St. Luke's, Stephenville. Deacon Dana Wilson, Mentor*

The group at St. Luke, Stephenville has seven members (one year-four student and six year-one students). We meet on Thursdays from 4:00 to 6:30 P.M. We recently completed a series on prayer (Common Lesson 4). In September we walked the labyrinth at St. Luke's. In October we experienced a Taizé service with Fr. Curt Norman and later that month featured a session on contemplative prayer led by the Rt. Rev. Sam Hulsey and Stuart Murff (St. Francis, Willow Park). The group is also exploring prayer and art. One student will complete the course in December and be ready for May 2014 graduation.

4. *Trinity, Fort Worth, Karen Ann Shepherd, Mentor*

The EfM group which meets at Trinity, Fort Worth, on Tuesday evenings added three new members this year, giving us a total of ten. Three of us are from St. Alban's, Arlington, two from

St. Anne's, Fort Worth, and seven from Trinity. Mtr. Judith Upham and Karen Shepherd, mentor together. Mtr. Judy and Karen enjoyed the muggy heat of July at Camp Allen for our mentor training this year. It was a particularly good session because of the new curriculum which has been adopted. Our new year actually begins in November, but we're finishing up this year, after having taken our summer break and have already received our new books in eager anticipation of the first Tuesday in November. Eight will graduate after next year, when they will have finished their four year study.

Contact me or another Mentor to:

- Start an EfM seminar group in your congregation.
- Join an EfM seminar group.
- Learn about the on-line groups that The University of the South has for those in remote areas. (We have an EfM graduate who completed four years in an online seminar group and loved it!)
- Ask questions about the program, scholarships, or mentoring.

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