

LTP “Curate” Training Program

The path to become a Locally Trained Priest (or Curate*) in the Diocese of Saskatoon, has two distinct but related components. The first is the **discernment** process, which involves a series of meetings with one’s parish priest and the Bishop, extensive reflection, a written application, recommendations, police and social-service checks, and a successful interview with the Examining Chaplains. The second component (which may occur simultaneously with the first) is the actual **training** of the candidate in the theory and practice of ministry. This document deals specifically with the training component of the Program. More information about the discernment process can be obtained by contacting the Bishop.

*a note on vocabulary: we have chosen to rehabilitate the term “curate” to refer to locally trained priests, as it more accurately describes their role as leaders in the local congregation entrusted with the “care of souls”. Curates and Incumbents are both ordained priests, simply with different levels of training, and different licenses.

Training for Ministry

Once a candidate has received permission from the Bishop to begin training, the program can be expected to take two or three years. It will depend in part on the amount of time a candidate can spend on the work. All costs of the training are covered by the Diocese, with the awareness that the candidate, once ordained, will be working as a priest in a non-stipendary (voluntary) capacity. Please remember that completion of training does not guarantee ordination; that decision rests finally with the Bishop.

There are three aspects or “streams” to the training process, which operate simultaneously. They are as follows:

- 1) **Apprenticeship** – the candidate in training will work closely with her or his parish priest on a week to week basis. This will involve hands-on practice in the Sunday liturgy, pastoral visiting, parish administration, preaching, and other ministerial tasks, under the direct supervision of the parish priest. (If there is no current incumbent in the parish, another priest in the deanery will take on this role.) The priest will also function as a mentor, taking time for conversation, coaching, intentional reflection, and other forms of support. The parish itself will also form a support group for the candidate during their apprenticeship. A “learning covenant” will set out the parameters of this

apprenticeship, and periodic reports and other communication between the priest-mentor and the training program coordinator will be necessary. Though the official “apprenticeship” will only last for the duration of the training, the ongoing relationship between the parish priest and the newly ordained curate will need to remain healthy and strong.

- 2) **Spiritual Formation** – with the help of the mentor priest and/or a spiritual director, the candidate will learn to develop a rule of life, including daily prayer and other forms of spiritual discipline. Through intentional journaling, conversation, and reflection on her experiences in ministry, the candidate will grow into a deep sense of priestly identity. This will also include developing his instincts and skills of habitual theological reflection.
- 3) **Academic Study** – during the candidate’s period of training, she or he is expected to cover 10 courses of study. These courses are of two different types:

Core academic courses

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Foundational Theology
- Church History
- Ethics

And ...

In-house, hands-on seminars

- Liturgy and Preaching (part 1)
- Liturgy and Preaching (part 2)
- Pastoral Care
- Evangelism and Discipleship
- Parish Administration

The **core academic courses** are offered on an ongoing basis, through a “reading and tutorial” method. What that means is that the student will be reading through a textbook, chapter by chapter, answering reflection questions, and conversing via email and phone with an assigned tutor. There may also be extra assignments, such as short book reviews, mini-essays, or internet research involved. Each of these courses should be completed within 3 to 6 months, and more than one course may be taken at a time. There will also be a small amount of time set aside at each in-house gathering, for students to discuss the learning they have been doing in their reading courses. For those with the inclination and aptitude, it is also possible to complete these core courses through the STU or other theological institutions, provided the course content is similar.

The **in-house, hands-on seminars** will be offered in rotation, three times per academic year, over a two-year cycle as follows:

Year A ... autumn seminar: Liturgy and Preaching (part 1) ... winter seminar: Evangelism and Discipleship ... summer seminar: Pastoral Care

Year B ... autumn seminar – Liturgy and Preaching (part 2) ... winter seminar: Parish Administration ... summer seminar: Episcopal Visit (not a course, but rather a weekend with the Bishop)

These in-house seminars are very intensive, practical sessions of skill-building. For each of these courses, there will also be some readings to be completed prior to each seminar, and some assignments to be completed after the seminar is over.

With diligence and dedication, a candidate can expect to complete all three aspects of training (**Apprenticeship, Spiritual Formation, and Academic Study**) in two or three years. However, people lead full and busy lives, and if it takes longer, then so be it.

While the Curate Training Program does not provide MDiv level instruction, it does build a firm foundation of biblical, theological, and pastoral skills for local priestly ministry. And, as with all forms of ordination-stream training, it provides a starting point rather than an ending, for life-long theological education.

Locally Trained Deacon Program

For those who are discerning a call to the permanent or vocational diaconate, the training component is very similar to that of the program outlined above. However, there are several significant differences:

- the Apprenticeship is done in a community agency, NGO, or other justice-based organization, rather than in a parish (though there are still some parish components)
- Spiritual Formation is undertaken with a focus on diaconal, rather than priestly, identity
- for Academic Study, a seminar on Community Mission and Ministry replaces Parish Administration, and a seminar on Peace, Justice, and the Integrity of Creation replaces Evangelism and Discipleship

For more information on the LTP Training Program, please contact the Diocesan Office at anglicansynod@sasktel.net or 244-5651.