

Education for Ministry Report to 2014 Convention

Marti Fagley, diocesan coordinator

October 23, 2014

Education for Ministry (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 at 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 mentors are accredited on a regular basis, often choosing to go to Camp Allen near Navasota, Texas.

Our diocese continues to offer EfM in five locations:

1. St. Stephen's, Hurst – the Rev. Tracie Middleton, mentor
2. St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Keller – the Rev. Judy Upham, mentor
3. St. Luke's, Stephenville – the Rev. Dana Wilson, mentor
4. Trinity, Fort Worth – Ms. Karen Ann Shepherd, mentor
5. St. Christopher's, Fort Worth – Ms. Marti Fagley, mentor

Curriculum was drastically changed this year and our participants this year are studying from textbooks and a study guide. The new materials are very good and have been well received by participants and mentors alike. We even have the books in recorded form for those who prefer to "hear" the materials. We have groups that start at various times through the fall and winter (e.g., September, October and January). This has worked well for us.

On November 1, the Rev. Dana Wilson assumed the role of diocesan coordinator. She has well over 25 years of mentoring experience and will be excellent in this role. Please contact any of the mentors or parishes that have chapters if you want to know more about EfM or want to join a group or contact Wilson at dana9651@sbcglobal.net for more information.