

Foundations in Christian Ministry course at SWMTC for the Exeter Diocese

Course description 2023-24

The Foundations in Christian Ministry course is a major component of formal lay ministry training in the Diocese of Exeter. It is in the same training family as the Grow courses. It is the foundational year for Licensed Lay Ministry training.



The **aims** of the course are:

- to deepen your Christian discipleship
- to give a grounded understanding of the Bible, Christian theology, and spirituality
- to explore and help form your gifts for ministry and discern God's call for your next step
- to provide you with a foundation for further training in lay ministry

The course's **objectives** -
by the end of the course you will:

- have been introduced to the major elements of Biblical studies and Christian doctrine (at a level just short of the first stage of a degree)
- have encountered a range of forms of prayer and expressions of Christian spirituality
- understand the main principles of pastoral care
- be equipped with skills to aid your involvement in God's ministry and mission
- have developed basic skills of personal journaling and reflection
- have explored your vocation, with guidance, and talked with a range of others

The course **consists** of:

Study days

- These are the heart of the course. They run from 10am to 4.30pm.
- Each involves a mix of informal lectures and group discussions, on the Bible, Theology, Spirituality, Pastoral Care and Ministry skills, set within a context of worship.
- There are seven study days between September and June. They are held in Exeter. Dates are Sep 23rd, Oct 28th, Dec 2nd, Jan 27th, Mar 16th, Apr 20th, Jun 1st.
- Detailed timetables will be provided.

Tutor groups

- At each Study Day you spend some time in small tutor groups. This gives opportunity to reflect on your experiences on the course with others, and on vocational exploration.
- Between each Study Day, each tutor group meets for a 'Stepping Stone' meeting via Zoom.

A learning community

- The course group is a 'learning community' of people journeying and growing together.
- You make a commitment to pray for others on the course.

Local discussion groups and written exercises

- In the Autumn and Spring terms you should take part in a small discussion group in your local parishes: in the Autumn term as a participating member, and in the Lent term as a leader. These groups may use a particular course (e.g. Pilgrim, Alpha), be a Bible study group, or explore a locally chosen topic, with typically half-a-dozen sessions.
- You are encouraged to do a number of short written exercises through the year. These include writing an article for your parish magazine or website, and a book review.
- The courses and written exercises aim to help you link the course with your local context and develop your ministry skills.

Other aspects

- *Spiritual Pathways* – between each study day you are encouraged to engage in a set of guided spiritual exercises.
- *Online* – all training materials are made available on a Moodle website. An online forum discussion follows each study day.
- *Journaling* – you're encouraged to journal your learning experiences.

Local support

- You are encouraged to discuss your experiences on the course regularly with either your incumbent or another minister in your parish.
- This will help them to support your learning, and to understand how best to encourage the growth of your local ministry as a result.
- You are also encouraged to keep your congregation(s) informed of what you are doing, so that they too can feel involved and support you on the course.
- Your incumbent needs to support your course application.

Reading

- Suggested reading will be provided for the different subject areas of the course.
- Doing further reading will help deepen your learning beyond that covered on the Study Days. It is up to you how much you do.
- You will need to purchase your own books; you may wish to approach your PCC for financial support. You will have access to a wide range of theological books online.

Teaching staff

The course team comprises people engaged in lay or ordained ministry across the Diocese. The Diocesan Vocations Development Officer is a contributor. The course is overseen by the SWMTC Director of Lay Training.

Further information

For more information and an application form, contact the SWMTC Programmes Coordinator, Belinda Speed-Andrews, admin@swmtc.org.uk, 01392 272544.

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