



News Release

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WYCLIFFE COLLEGE PRESENTS THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OPTION IN WINNIPEG

TORONTO - If a student wishes to study theology at a Masters level in the Prairies, their options are few. That is changing.

St. John's College (University of Manitoba) and Wycliffe College (University of Toronto) have partnered with Saint Margaret's Anglican Church, Winnipeg, to offer two courses, team-taught by Wycliffe College professors and the Rev'd Dr. David Widdicombe, rector at Saint Margaret's. The courses are offered under the banner of The Ecclesial University, a project of Saint Margaret's, which aims to offer vigorous theological education at the church level-study which, as it is rooted in the Church, must always end in worship.

This past fall, eight students and 17 auditors registered to take Introduction to Anglican Theology, team-taught by Wycliffe's Rev'd Dr. Ephraim Radner and Dr. Widdicombe. In the winter term, Saint Margaret's will offer Systematic Theology 1: God of the Gospel, team-taught by Wycliffe's Dr. Joseph Mangina and Dr. Widdicombe.

Kirsten Pinto Gfroerer, Ecclesial University program director and lay pastoral associate at Saint Margaret's, says that more than ever, there is a need for this kind of education within the parish. "In our current Church context we need to be visionary, inventive, and rigorous in our approach to theological education for ordinands and all those pursuing their Christian vocation in the Church and in the world," she says. "We need a generation of priests and laity who are capable of and committed to reaching into the deep wells of scripture, tradition, and reason, in order that they may feed and inspire the Church even under profound duress."

Key to the program is its rootedness in the life of the church. As part of each course, several public lectures are offered each term to the Diocese. And if students don't wish to pursue degree programs, they are invited to fully participate in the classes as auditors. "The opportunity to study alongside the church's many bright minds, in courses meant to feed and strengthen the parish, is a great service to those unable to, unsure about, or not interested in the pursuit of full-time academics," says auditor Mark Gareau.

Landon Erb, a Masters of Divinity student at Wycliffe College, says that studying Anglican Theology at

Saint Margaret's has given him an understanding of how a rigorous approach to theology can be attended to within the church setting, which has been invaluable for him as he prepares for ordained ministry. "I have been made keenly aware of how a variety of parishioners engage with the material we have been covering in class," he says. "This type of learning is not commonly found in universities, so I consider myself blessed to study within and with the parish."

From October 24 to 26, Dr. Radner visited Saint Margaret's, conducting intensive seminars on catechesis in Anglicanism and the historical approach to the Creeds within the Anglican Church around the world.

Dr. Radner's visit, and his vigorous, inspiring teaching, was a gift to the Ecclesial University project and to St. Margaret's. As we look to the future, we are confident that many more lines of connection between the Ecclesial University project and partner programs will be implemented, and many more fruitful relationships built, that will deepen our experience of theology and worship.

Plans for the next academic year include Dr. Chris Seitz offering a new course on 'Theological Exegesis for Preaching' and Dr. George Sumner offering 'Great 20th Century Texts on the Church.'

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