

The Ministry Trainee Scheme

2017-2018. St John's, Tunbridge Wells

St John's Church

St John's is an Anglican evangelical church near the centre of Tunbridge Wells. Our mission statement is: 'Knowing Jesus better; making Jesus better known'. We believe that the Bible is the infallible, powerful, and sufficient word of God. Teaching, understanding, and obeying the Bible is therefore at the heart of what we do, whether in seeking to build up fellow Christians, or to reach out to non-Christians with the gospel of Christ.

We have a mainly professional congregation, but our members cover the full range of ages and come from a variety of social backgrounds. On Sundays, we have a morning service at 10.30am, attended by around 260 adults and 100 children, and an evening service at 6pm, attended by around 85 people, including quite a few older teenagers and young adults. These services are the heart of all we do, but we also encourage members to join a regular small group. Over 275 church members meet in home groups during the week, and there are a number of other small groups for teenagers, women, men, and a range of people at a variety of stages in life. There are also regular 'Christianity Explored' courses, for people looking into what Christianity is all about, and other events from time to time with an evangelistic focus.

St John's Ministry Trainee Scheme

Our Ministry Trainee Scheme has the primary aim of equipping Christians for full-time gospel ministry in the UK or abroad, by providing training and experience of ministry in a local church. However, the scheme is not limited to those who are certain that they want to serve Christ in a full-time paid capacity. We recognise that some will benefit from the scheme who are exploring whether or not full-time gospel work is for them. And some will decide that full time Bible teaching is not the best way that they can serve Christ, but will still gain much from the scheme, being better equipped to serve their churches in the future.

We aim to focus our training on the three basic areas of character, competence, and convictions.

Character

The first objective of the Ministry Trainee Scheme is to train Christ-like servants who will get on with practical service even when nobody else is watching. Trainees should not view Christian ministry as simply giving talks and leading Bible studies. We recognise that this places a responsibility on the rest of the staff team, and on all in leadership roles at St John's, to set the Trainees an example of cheerful, enthusiastic, humble service. Plenty of routine jobs like photocopying, moving chairs, and setting up toddler groups also help!

In addition, Trainees meet regularly with an older Christian of the same sex to read the Bible, pray, and discuss their Christian lives. They will also be encouraged to take plenty of time for daily personal Bible reading and prayer.

Competence

During their time on the Ministry Trainee Scheme, trainees can expect to grow in their competence in ministry. There is no shortage of ministry opportunities at St John's, and Trainees should expect to play a full part in various areas of the church's ministry, and to be trained and equipped as they do so. For example:

- Helping to teach the children in their groups on a Sunday morning.
- Helping lead a teenagers' Bible study group
- Assisting at our Monday Fellowship for older folk, and visiting them in their homes
- Taking school assemblies
- Helping with one of our toddler groups
- Helping to run a school Christian Union

We anticipate that every Ministry Trainee will make a great contribution to the life of St John's, and also gain much experience of hands-on Christian ministry. Clearly no one Trainee could do all of those things, and each is different, with particular strengths and experience. But each would probably be fully involved in two or three areas of ministry in their time at St John's. The best experience is gained when a Trainee arrives with an attitude

of being willing to throw themselves into whatever is asked of them, and when their Line Manager is doing their best to shape the job to the Trainee's gifts and passions!

Convictions

The Ministry Trainee Scheme is not a time of formal theological training, but character and competence flow out of one's Christian convictions, so we do provide some Bible input. This training will be provided alongside trainees on similar schemes in other local churches. It comprises a mix of:

- Biblical theology: seeing how the whole Bible fits together, and how different biblical books contribute to the message of the Bible as a whole.
- Studying biblical books: a deeper look at a book per term over the course of the year, with a particular emphasis on improving our skills in handling Scripture.
- Christian doctrine: the study of key Christian truths, summarising the teaching of the Bible.
- Practical ministry: wisdom from experienced Christian ministers on a range of topics.

In addition to this formal programme of training, we hope to send Trainees on the 9:38 Apprentices' Conference, to encourage leading on a Christian Summer Venture and attending other conferences and training days as we are able. Ministry Trainees also benefit simply from observing, participating in, talking about, and reflecting on, the experience of being involved day to day in a busy and varied church.

Finance and accommodation

Clearly, financial considerations will vary from trainee to trainee, depending on their stage in life and family commitments. St John's will provide a £4,986 training allowance, plus funding for any conferences or courses that we ask Trainees to attend and reimbursement for work-related expenses. Ministry Trainees are asked to raise any other money that they need from their own savings, families and friends, and other supporters. Accommodation is normally provided in a nearby flat which you will share with other Ministry Trainees. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

For an application form, or to talk further about the scheme, contact Dick Farr:

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For more information about St John's, see our website: www.stjohnstw.org