

2024-2025 ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Introduction - Adult Christian Formation

Adult formation is foundational to our spiritual journey. It offers the invitation to study, reflect and have conversation to explore who we are and who we are called to be. The models for this type of discovery are numerous and varied – study of scripture, investigation of our Anglican faith and theology, looking at our common history through the ages, discussing the context of our families in light of our faith, exploring art and music as reflecting the divine, sharing different methods of prayer, just to name a few. It is in the gathering together, the sharing of fellowship, and always opening ourselves up to exploring and learning about our faith, that we further strengthen the blessing of our relationships with our Creator and each other. This is more about formation than it is simple education; our lives especially during this time are always changing; we are constantly forming and reforming what it means to be a disciple of Christ. St. Michael's is committed to providing ministry opportunities and meaningful programs which will help support and guide us in our journey together.

Sunday Formation Program

Formation classes are held each Sunday from 9:00 - 9:50am in the Parish Hall. The curriculum runs from September through May. Each summer, based upon Father Andrew's discretion and the suggested topics submitted by parishioners, the curriculum is set for the following formation year. In fact, most of the topics this year came from you! It is important to remember that this is your parish, and this is your formation program; please do not hesitate to contact Father Andrew with any ideas or suggestions for future classes!

2024-2025 Calendar and Curriculum

September 15, 2024: Conversation with the Rector: Welcome back! This is the first day of the new Adult Formation year and after the summer break, this is an opportunity to check in with Father Andrew and each other. Bring whatever comments or questions you have for Father Andrew – worship, scripture, theology or perhaps something related to our parish life and ministries. We hope you will join us this Sunday and throughout the formation year!

September 22, 2024: The Twelve Disciples: We start off the formation year with a repeat suggestion to explore the identities, backgrounds, lives and ministries of the original followers of Jesus Christ. Who were they? Where did they come from? What were their travels and what happened to them following the resurrection? Please join us as we take a look at these questions and any others that come up along the way!

September 29, 2024: The Twelve Disciples

October 6, 2024: The Twelve Disciples

October 13, 2024: No Class – Diocesan Convention

October 20, 2024: The Gospel of Thomas: While four gospels were selected to be part of the canon and Holy Scripture (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John), there were other gospels written, read and followed by faith communities in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. We will take a couple of weeks to explore one of them, The Gospel of Thomas, which is attributed to Thomas the Twin, one of the twelve disciples. We will take a look at its origins, unique structure, content and theology. How does this gospel relate to the four canonical gospels? Why was it not included in the Bible? How does it inform or relate to our faith and understanding of Jesus Christ?

October 27, 2024: The Gospel of Thomas

November 3, 2024: Heresies of the Church: From the beginning, and up to the present day, certain Christian beliefs and views have received the response, “That’s heretical!” From the suggestion box, we spend a couple of weeks investigating what this means, and maybe just as importantly, what it doesn’t! We will take some time to look at a few of the predominant heresies which challenged the early faith and that resulted in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

November 10, 2024: Heresies of the Church

November 17, 2024: No Class – K&E Celebration

November 24, 2024: Is Thanksgiving “Christian?” With the arrival of the Thanksgiving holiday, we take a session to explore this secular holiday’s relationship, both in theme and in common practice, with the Christian faith and life.

December 1, 2024: No Class - Thanksgiving

December 8, 2024: Advent and the Incarnation: With the arrival of the Advent season, we take some time to explore the birth of Jesus Christ in the world, both what it meant at the time and what it means in our present world. This presents the theological notion of incarnation – the belief in the physical presence of God in creation and among us. What does this mean in our Christian faith? What might it say in our present lives and how we live them?

December 15, 2024: What the heck is “premillennial dispensationalism?” This is the “bookend” to the previous week, because just as Advent is the anticipation for the birth of Christ, it is also looking to the second coming of Christ, and that is what premillennialism is all about – the beliefs and ideas surrounding the second coming, what it might look like and its underlying meaning.

December 22, 2024: Exploring Christmas: We customarily reserve the formation gathering before Christmas simply to reflect upon the meaning of the Feast of the Nativity. Everything from exploring the historical background to chasing down St. Nicholas, this is simply an open forum for us to share our thoughts and insights.

December 29, 2024: No Class – Christmas Holiday

January 5, 2025: Holy Trinity: Early in the evolution of Christianity, the theology of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – emerged and gained a stronghold in the faith. But from its onset, it likewise brought confusion, conflict and even division as to its meaning and significance. We will spend three sessions exploring the origins and early understandings of the Trinity and how this theology has

evolved over time. How does the notion of the Trinity guide our belief in God and our spiritual journey? We will leave plenty of time for conversation about the various conflicts that have arisen, and the efforts made to resolve them.

January 12, 2025: Holy Trinity

January 19, 2025: Holy Trinity

January 26, 2025: No Class – Annual Meeting

February 2, 2025: Comparative Religions: We received two requests in our suggestion box to revisit and explore the major religions of the world – Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. We will take four sessions to briefly explore their origins and basic belief systems. How are these faith traditions similar to one another and how are they different? What is their relationship, if any, to each other? What is their relationship, if any, to Christianity? We will leave plenty of time for questions and conversation about how these religions influence our current world and how they might inform our own spiritual journey as disciples of Christ.

February 9, 2025: Comparative Religions

February 16, 2025: Comparative Religions

February 23, 2025: Comparative Religions

March 2, 2025: Saint Damien and Saint Marianne of Molokai: From the suggestion box requesting that we explore sainthood, we are offering two sessions to take a closer look at Hawaii’s canonized saints. We will explore the lives and ministries of St. Damien and St. Marianne, what brought them to the islands, their work among the leper colony on Molokai, and their lasting legacy including their journey to sainthood recognition by the Roman Catholic Church.

March 9, 2025: Saint Damien and Saint Marianne of Molokai

March 16, 2025: The Life and Theology of John Calvin: Each curriculum year, we reserve time to explore an influential theologian that has a significant impact upon the Christian faith. This time around its John Calvin, a French pastor and theologian who was one of leading voices during the Protestant Reformation. We will take a look at Calvin’s life and background, the doctrines and views for which he advocated during the reformation movement and his lasting legacy in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of today. Along the way, we will investigate what relationship, if any, the views of Calvin have with our own Anglican/Episcopal faith.

March 23, 2025: The Life and Theology of John Calvin

March 30, 2025: The Life and Theology of John Calvin

April 6, 2025: Exploring Holy Week: It is our tradition to reserve the formation gathering prior to Holy Week to explore and discuss its historical origins, theological meanings and ritual observances. This is an open time of questions and sharing as we prepare to journey with Christ during his final days before the cross.

April 13, 2025: No Class – Palm Sunday

April 20, 2025: No Class – Easter Sunday

April 27, 2025: The Gospel of Luke: On the First Sunday of Advent, we began a new liturgical year, and with it, Lectionary Year C (The readings in our worship follow a three-year cycle – A, B and C). Year C emphasizes the Gospel of Luke, especially during the season after Pentecost, so this is a good time to explore his gospel. We will take several sessions to do so, including a look at its origins, context and its likely intended audience. We will also discuss Luke’s unique view of Jesus, his extensive use of parables and how his gospel compares with the others.

May 4, 2025: The Gospel of Luke

May 11, 2025: The Gospel of Luke

May 18, 2025: The Gospel of Luke

May 25, 2025: The Gospel of Luke

June 1, 2025: Conversation with the Rector: We conclude the formation year in our usual fashion of reserving the last gathering for a time of conversation and reflection. How did the formation year go? What was a success and what, if anything, needs some attention or change in the coming year? What topics or issues should our formation time include in the future? Bring whatever questions or comments that you might have to the group for reflection and discussion.

Advent and Lent Programs

These are currently under consideration for the upcoming year. Further details will be provided in the future as these seasons draw closer.

Music Ministry

Music is a beloved blessing at St. Michael and All Angels. Under the direction of Music Director, Alan Van Zee, our adult choir offers the gift of their voices in praise and worship during the 10:00am Sunday service. Participating in our rich music heritage is a meaningful way to enhance both worship and formation in the Christian journey. Anyone interested in our music ministry is encouraged to contact Alan for more details.

Worship Ministries

Christian formation begins with worship, and while it might be unusual to think of service during worship as a formation opportunity, participating in the liturgy can be a holy, spiritual and meaningful experience which enhances our faith and discipleship. There are several, unique ways to become involved – altar guild, greeter, usher, lector, chalice bearer just to name a few. We encourage everyone to become involved during our service; training sessions for these ministries are held periodically throughout the year. If you have any interest, please contact Father Andrew.