



The Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church

Report of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church
to the 144th Council of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic
of the Reformed Episcopal Church

October 15, 2024

Mission

The mission and ministry of the Reformed Episcopal Seminary (RES) are integrally related to the work of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic (NEMA) and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). We strive “to train Christ’s people to serve the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ through Biblical Anglican Worship, Example, and Discipleship as defined in the official standards of the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) and the ACNA. Students are immersed in Scripture, the historical and ancient traditions of the church, worship, and doctrine, and an emphasis is placed on classical Anglicanism lived out in the world through worship, evangelism, and discipleship.” The Seminary accepts students who desire to learn more about the truth of God’s Word, the historic apostolic faith, and to be equipped to serve God in their communities and the world. Thus, we train and equip leaders for other orthodox Anglican jurisdictions and the wider Christian church, teaching our students to learn from and work together with students of different backgrounds and ecclesiastical traditions, but to always stand firm for the truth of the Gospel and God’s inspired Word.

To that end, the Seminary offers two graduate degrees.

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is designed to provide comprehensive training in all aspects of Christian ministry, including Biblical studies and languages, theology, church history, preaching and teaching, pastoral counseling and administration, liturgies, and practical theology. The M.Div. is a rigorous program that is designed to be completed in three years of full-time study. It prepares graduates for many forms of ordained and lay ministry, including parish ministry, military or hospital chaplaincy, and Christian education or discipleship.

The Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) is a degree is designed for those whose vocations lie more in the realms of teaching, research, and writing, or those who want to begin theological training but are discerning how they will put that training to use. The MATS program can be completed in approximately two years.

During the past year, the Seminary created a new diploma program for those interested in studying for ministry as a deacon or deaconess. The Licentiate in Theology (LTh) is a twelve-course sequence designed to provide both theoretical and practical training for ministry. The LTh may be completed in one year of full-time or two years of part-time study.

In addition to the two graduate degrees and the LTh, the Seminary offers fifteen certificates, ranging from Biblical languages, to pastoral theology, and Anglican Studies.

Move to Saint Paul's Church, Oreland

As noted in our report to Council in 2023, the Seminary is in the process of moving to its new home at Saint Paul's REC in Oreland. The move will provide the Seminary with larger classrooms, more student spaces, and offices for all faculty. In addition, the larger library space at Saint Paul's will allow RES to move that part of the collection (estimated at one-third of the library's holding) out of storage and into the stacks. In addition, Saint Paul's is more centrally located for commuters and is located in an areas that has a wider range of housing options.

We also expect that the move to Saint Paul's will help stabilize the Seminary's finances in two ways. First, vacating the current facilities at Blue Bell will reduce operating costs by half. Secondly, the proceeds from the sale of the Blue Bell campus will allow the Seminary to increase its endowment.

Sale of the Blue Bell Campus

The four buildings which make up the Blue Bell campus are currently listed for sale with a commercial real estate broker. These include two houses formerly used for student residences, the main classroom building, and the office building. One of the houses recently sold and the proceeds devoted to defraying the costs of the Seminary move. The other buildings have been viewed by buyers on a number of occasions. It is our hope that the three remaining properties will be sold prior to Summer 2025.

Faculty

RES is privileged to have an accomplished and experienced faculty. At present, our core faculty consists of seven holders of doctoral degrees from universities in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. More importantly, we have striven to ensure that our faculty remains firmly in the Anglican tradition and have recently welcomed several new members committed to this ethos to ensure that RES remains a bulwark of orthodox Anglican doctrine and practice. Among the newcomers this term are the Reverend Dr. Eric Parker (REC Diocese of the Central States), who will teach historical theology. Dr. Parker holds a PhD from McGill University and serves as Assistant Professor of Historical Theology. Joining him is the Reverend Dr. Kyles Hughes (REC Diocese of the Southeast), who holds a PhD from Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. We are pleased to welcome the Reverend Dr. Aaron Pelot (REC Diocese of the Central States), who currently teaching at the University of Saint Andrews, and is leading two of our Saturday courses (online) for deacons. Finally, the Reverend Dr. David Compton (REC Diocese of the Central States), from Trinity College, Dublin, and an expert in Islam, will be teaching World Religions in the Spring term.

Enrollment

Our student enrollment has remained small, but stable over time. At present, we have twenty-seven students enrolled in all degrees and certificates both for credit and audit. We currently have four MDiv and eight MA students. Another three students are enrolled in the LTh (deacon) and one in the LTh (deaconess).

Our students join classes both in person on the Blue Bell campus and online. Currently, we have students pursuing degrees and certificates from places as far away as Arizona, Venezuela, and Scotland.

Support

We continue to be grateful for the support that the Diocese, its congregations, and members throughout the years have given. Your support of the mission of the Seminary is vital not only to the health and outreach of the REC, but to the many other churches and ministries where our students are able to serve because of the work of our Seminary. We hope that you will continue to remember the Seminary in your ongoing giving and estate planning. In addition, we ask that you actively encourage prospective students to consider RES for their theological education. Finally, we ask for your prayers. We know that it is only through God's grace that the Reformed Episcopal Seminary has endured thus far, and we hope that it is His will to preserve and strengthen the Seminary so that it may continue to serve the Diocese, the REC, and the wider Church for many years to come.