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caleb stream

Introduction



THE VISION

The vision for the Caleb Stream is to help revitalise the Church by increasing ordinations of *experienced leaders* who are called to serve in their local context as *self-supporting ministers*.



WHAT IS THE CALEB STREAM?

The Caleb Stream is a faster, lower-cost pathway which takes 'seasoned saints' – those with a track record of leadership, ministry and life experience – and overlaps selection and training so that they are ready for deployment within 12 months, supporting an incumbent.

Candidates complete bespoke, high quality, part-time training at an agreed theological college over one academic year, alongside their current job/role.

At the same time, they are supported through the national discernment process for ordination, aiming for a recommendation in time to be ordained deacon the following Petertide/Michaelmas.

So far, we have 9 ordained 'Calebs', with 27 undertaking training at St Mellitus College (London and East Midlands Centres) from 6 different dioceses. We are working closely with Ministry Team – Bishop Chris Goldsmith sits on our steering group and is supportive and engaged with the development of the stream.

WHY SHOULD CANDIDATES BE INTERESTED?

- It will enable them to use their life and Christian experience in the ordained ministry.
- It will allow them to be ordained more quickly with fewer hurdles to clear and additional support through the discernment process.
- They will be able to serve in their current community with the support of the incumbent.
- They can serve their church in ways distinctive to the priest, e.g. administer the sacraments.

WHY SHOULD A DIOCESE BE INTERESTED?

- It could help shift parishes from decline/maintenance to growth.
- It will provide support to hard-pressed clergy.
- It will provide a pipeline of ordained leaders for new congregations that are emerging.
- It is faster and lower cost than current paths.
- Discernment will be supported with regular input to DDOs from college tutors.
- It is 100% in the control of the diocese.



HOW CAN IT BE SO QUICK?

There are two key factors that make this possible:

SELECTING THE RIGHT CANDIDATES

Candidates are a known-quantity in their parish, they have 30+ years of working experience and a track record of Christian ministry. The Caleb Stream is only open to those that the sending diocese deem to be appropriate for this pathway.

DEPLOYMENT

Caleb Stream priests are to be deployed locally, usually back into their current context, and only in support of an incumbent.

In addition, discernment and training take place concurrently and thus there is a significant increase in contact time with the candidates through the selection process. College tutors keep in close contact with DDOs throughout the year to ensure appropriate selection and formation.

WHEN AND HOW MIGHT IT WORK?

From September 2023, the Caleb Stream is being offered at three TEIs:

- St Mellitus College London (where the Stream began)
- St Mellitus College East Midlands (Nottingham)
- St Hild College York (new in 2023)

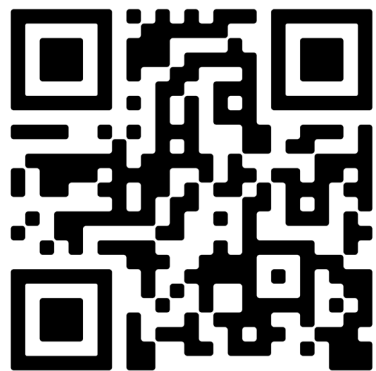
As selection and formation overlap, we need to keep to a tight timetable to ensure candidates are ready for ordination the following Petertide/Michaelmas.

	SECTION	TRAINING
By July	Candidates identified by diocese and interviewed by TEI	
Autumn Term	Stage 1 discernment	Begin training at TEI
Spring Term	Stage 2 discernment	
Summer Term	Completion of Stage 2 panel	Recommended by TEI
Petertide or Michaelmas	Ordination	
	Deacons join their diocese's IME 2	

Mark Beard



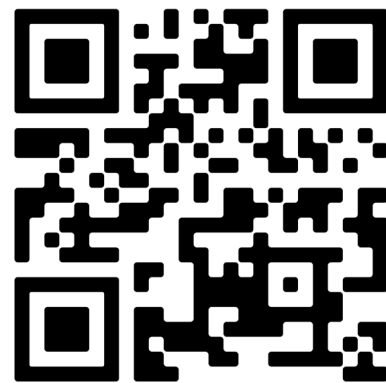
SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH MARK'S STORY
SHARING HIS EXPERIENCE OF BEING
ON THE CAELB STREAM



Linde Melhuish



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH LINDE'S STORY
SHARING HER EXPERIENCE OF BEING
ON THE CAELB STREAM



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In our discussions to date, a number of questions have been raised and we have answered them as best we can below.

1. HOW WILL CANDIDATES BE IDENTIFIED?

We understand that Bishops and DDOs often already have people in mind and these would be the first to approach. There may also be candidates known to incumbents in the diocese who could be proposed for consideration, and this opportunity should be communicated widely to generate additional applicants.

2. HOW LONG SHOULD DISCERNMENT AND FORMATION TAKE?

In many cases, candidates have been working alongside their incumbent for some years and the call to the ordained ministry has been growing steadily. In addition, assuming they have been involved in Christian ministry over many years and have been developing as leaders during their career to date, these should be people whose formation has been taking place long before they embark on this process. By starting theological education ahead of a recommendation from a Stage 2 panel, there is an opportunity for more intensive discernment and formation involving the incumbent, DDO/ADO and the Tutor at the TEI.

3. WHO MAKES THE DECISION RE ORDINATION AND DEPLOYMENT?

As with any candidate for ministry, this is totally in the control of the bishop, alongside the guidance of the DDO. The candidates undergo the usual national selection process.

4. WHICH TEIS ARE OFFERING A CALEB STREAM PATHWAY?

The Caleb Stream is currently being offered at St Mellitus College London and St Mellitus College East Midlands (Nottingham). From September 2023, St Hild College York will also begin Caleb Stream. Other TEIs, across tradition and spread across the country, have also agreed to offer Caleb Stream moving forward.

5. WHAT IF A CANDIDATE IS NOT SELECTED FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY?

Any candidate that is not selected for ordained ministry is still invited to complete the training and is supported in finding a way for them to use their gifts and training in a suitable lay capacity.

6. WILL CALEB STREAM PRIESTS BE SECOND CLASS?

A blunt question and a blunt answer – NO! Caleb Stream candidates will be selected following the national process and their orders will be transferable. Bishop's Licences and Permissions to Officiate have always been in place and do not delineate different classes of priesthood.

7. HOW CAN DDOS MANAGE THIS ADDITIONAL WORKLOAD?

For dioceses where DDO capacity is likely to be a challenge, our suggestion is that additional ADOs are trained and appointed to support the Caleb Stream candidates, under the guidance of the DDO. Whilst identification of such ADOs may not be easy, it is hoped that volunteers might be encouraged by the vision for the Caleb Stream. The TEI will also be providing support for the candidates through the discernment process.

8. WILL THIS RESULT IN ORDINATIONS OF UNSUITABLE PEOPLE?

No selection process can be infallible. However, the selection process must be rigorous and especially with regard to safeguarding. Candidates go through the same selection process as other candidates and, given that candidates have many years of leadership at work and in Christian ministry, the referencing process is particularly important and should provide valuable evidence for discernment. The candidates are supported closely by the TEI Tutor, alongside the DDO/ADO, ensuring a thorough discernment process.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF A CALEB STREAM PRIEST APPLIES TO MOVE PARISH/DIOCESE?

The intention is that a Caleb Stream Priest, at the point of ordination, will be deployed into a local context where they intend to remain for the foreseeable future. An application to redeploy to another parish or diocese should be at the discretion of the bishop. At that stage, the priest will have developed a track record of ordained ministry which will provide valuable evidence of their suitability and effectiveness.

10. WHAT HAPPENS IF A CALEB STREAM PRIEST APPLIES FOR A STIPENDIARY ROLE?

The answer would be the same as that for Question 9.

11. HOW DOES THE CALEB STREAM COMPARE WITH SCHEMES LIKE THE ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTER (OLM)?

There are a wide variety of OLM schemes, some still operational, but most apparently dormant at best. Where OLM is still available as a path to ordination, the total time from the start of the discernment process to being priested is about four years. This is significantly longer than proposed for the Caleb Stream and is therefore more costly and less attractive to candidates. Some dioceses have their own 'unofficial' paths to ordination at the discretion of the bishops which are not dissimilar to the Caleb Stream concept. However, the Caleb Stream operates within the national selection processes and trains candidates at recognised TEIs, ensuring Caleb candidates will have transferrable orders, unlike many local schemes.

12. ARE MORE PRIESTS REALLY NEEDED? CAN'T LAY PEOPLE TAKE ON MORE?

Greater involvement of lay people in the leadership of parishes is, of course, very important. However, there are significant limitations on what a lay person can do within the Church of England and this means that the ordained incumbent is still required to spread themselves very thinly across many parishes. A model of rural ministry such as 'Focal Ministry' (link to Grove booklet 'Leading One Church at a Time') would be significantly enabled by being able to call on ordained priests.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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