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peter stream



Introduction

THE INTRODUCTION

This document provides an overview of the Peter Stream for church leaders and dioceses and *aims to equip* these groups to make informed decisions as to whether the Peter Stream might be beneficial for *potential candidates* in their contexts.

WHAT IS THE PETER STREAM?

Jesus saw in Peter the gifts and potential for an incredible ministry that he was calling him to, even though the Sanhedrin couldn't see it at first (Acts 4).

Our vision is to see a generation of church leadership that reflects and inspires the diversity of the body of Christ.

Our mission is to love, support and champion people through discernment, focusing on the three most underrepresented groups, namely racial, social and educational.

The Peter Stream is a one-year programme to be undertaken whilst in the existing Church of England discernment process; designed to identify and encourage gifts and calling of people from the three most underrepresented groups.



The Peter Stream is made up of the following key elements:



DISCERNMENT

Exploring areas designed to encourage and inspire whilst discerning God's calling.

TEACHING

Engaging theological content that is faith-enriching and discernment-relevant.

SUPPORT

Access to a range of support including a personal tutor, chaplaincy, counselling and specialist educational tutoring.

IN COMMUNITY

Embedded in a close and diverse community of peers that reflects Bishop Desmond Tutu's theological vision of the spirit of Ubuntu ('I am because you are').

To date the Peter Stream has seen 100+ candidates over six cohorts, in two locations (London and East Midlands). Candidates have drawn from across the country and from 10+ dioceses.



HOW CAN THE PETER STREAM COMPLEMENT THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS WITHIN YOUR DIOCESE?

We are committed to supporting the timeframe and pace of discernment that a diocese sees as most supportive for their candidate(s) and recognise that this will vary across dioceses.

However, we have found that the Peter Stream is best done at the point in which a candidate is going through the stage 1 and 2 process — whether they have at that point been in the discernment process for one month or one year. We have found keeping candidates on the Peter Stream in step in this way means that no one has a sense of feeling comparatively left behind.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO BE ON THE PETER STREAM?

Candidates do not apply to join the Peter Stream, rather they are recommended by both their church leader and by their diocese. See figure 1 below for an overview of the process.

GUIDANCE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

If you are aware of someone in your congregation who is discerning a call to priestly ministry and might be interested in the Peter Stream as a part of their discernment process, you should refer them to the director of vocations in your diocese.

A template is available offering guidance to incumbents when speaking to people in their congregation about the Peter Stream. Please email Richard to request a copy.

GUIDANCE FOR DIOCESAN STAFF

Once you have identified an appropriate candidate who would like to do the Peter Stream, you should refer them to St Mellitus College (PETERSTREAM@STMELLITUS.AC.UK), including some brief comments on the following areas:

- Indication of potential calling: involvement and integration in church life; articulation of desire to explore calling to ordained ministry (even if lacking confidence); affirmation/suggestion from others of potential calling.
- Support of church: supportive parish environment to keep exploring/testing sense of calling.
- Confidence in timeframe: into the stage 1 and 2 during the Peter Stream year seen as both helpful and realistic for candidate.
- Identify eligibility: according to which demographic(s)

FIGURE 1: THE TYPICAL PROCESS TO BE ON THE PETER STREAM

1. CANDIDATE MEETS WITH VICAR

Candidate expresses a sense of possible calling to ordained ministry & a desire to do the Peter Stream

2. VICAR REFERS CANDIDATE TO DDO

Vicar recommends candidate to DDO if they sense discernment is the right next step, & flags them for the Peter Stream

3. CANDIDATE MEETS WITH DDO

Candidate & DDO discuss their sense of calling and the possibility of doing the Peter Stream as part of their discernment process

4. DDO RECOMMENDS CANDIDATE

DDO recommend candidate to St Mellitus if they think the Peter Stream would be beneficial for the candidate

5. ST MELLITUS INTERVIEW

Candidate interview at St Mellitus College (either in person or Zoom)

6. OFFER LETTER & START

If successful, offer letter sent & candidate joins the Peter Stream alongside their discernment process from September

WHERE AND WHEN DOES THE PETER STREAM RUN?

The Peter Stream runs at St Mellitus College in two locations:

LONDON

4 Collingham Road, London, SW5 0LX — Mondays, 9.30am - 1.00pm

EAST MIDLANDS

192 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3HX — Tuesdays, 9.30am - 1.00pm

HOW MUCH DOES THE PETER STREAM COST?

The Revitalise Trust is fully committed to supporting the Peter Stream financially and has pledged to cover all costs relating to the Peter Stream for both candidates (travel expenses and materials) and dioceses (one-year discernment programme) so that these can come at no cost to either. The cost of the latter is £3,596 for the academic year 2023/24.

We do, however, encourage dioceses to contribute, where possible, to demonstrate commitment and follow the example of the Diocese of London which now funds all candidates from their diocese on the stream. We understand that dioceses are unlikely to have budgeted for any Peters during the first year of engagement. What we would ask is that dioceses consider adding this into their budget for future years, even if it's just an increasing percentage (e.g. 25% in year 1, 50% in year 2 etc).

Most candidates continue in full-time employment alongside the discernment programme. If selected for training for ordination, the costs of their formal training will be covered by Ministry Team in the usual way.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Please contact one of the following people to find out more:

- Revitalise Trust Inbox – CONTACT@REVITALISETRUST.ORG
- Richard Lloyd Special Projects Lead, Revitalise Trust – RICHARD.LLOYD@REVITALISETRUST.ORG
- Rev'd Julian Powell Peter Stream Chaplain, Revitalise Trust – JULIAN.POWELL@REVITALISETRUST.ORG
- Rev'd Mark Tatton Peter Stream Programme Lead, St Mellitus College – MARK.TATTON@STMELLITUS.AC.UK

Alternatively, please visit the following pages:

- [HTTP://REVITALISETRUST.ORG](http://REVITALISETRUST.ORG)
- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@REVITALISETRUST](https://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@REVITALISETRUST)
- [HTTPS://STMELLITUS.AC.UK](https://STMELLITUS.AC.UK)

Peter Stream Stories

Joe O'Sullivan



HOW DID YOU COME TO FAITH?

I grew up on a large council estate in London without experiencing the Church and didn't have a desire to know God at all. I hated the idea that there was a God who loved me, as my life never seemed that way, until a group of missionaries came to my estate through a HTB outreach. They did prayer walks every Friday night and one night approached me and asked if I wanted them to pray for me. I declined and said they could pray for me as they continued walking. They did indeed pray for me and two weeks later I had a dream about Jesus – my life has never been the same. With that dream, I knew Jesus was real but knew nothing about Him, not even the bare minimum. So, I ran to the only people I knew who had answers – the missionaries! They were very gentle and kind and sat with me for months until I decided to give my life to Jesus.

WHAT HAS BEEN SOME OF THE BARRIERS YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR JOURNEY TO LEADERSHIP?

I never saw someone from a council estate become a Priest. I left school at 13 with no GCSEs, and I didn't come from a good family or have money – so I felt foreign and unattainable. I was part of the Church for 10 years and believed the Church would want nothing to do with me if I wanted to be a Priest.

HOW HAS THE PETER STREAM HELPED?

The Peter stream is the only reason I went for ordination, because for the first time it was the only place that said it was possible. They loved me through the baffling process of being ordained and made it easier to understand. It also helped to do the journey with a group of people who look and sound like you, encouraging one another when it seemed impossible.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING NOW?

I'm currently a minister in charge of a council estate church, 3 miles away from my estate I grew up on. I have been here for nearly 4 years and loving the fact that I get to minister to people who I know and understand. I believe God can change anyone's life on a council estate because that is exactly what He did for me.



Louise Powell

HOW DID YOU COME TO FAITH?

I grew up in an Irish and Jamaican Christian family but it wasn't very stable so my early years were quite unsettling. I remember being in a tent at a summer festival around the age of 7 and saying I wanted to be Jesus' friend. It meant we got a free bible and I was into books. I spent my teens and twenties in church but at times it became more of a Sunday event and felt a real desire to give my all when I was baptised at 20.

WHAT HAS BEEN SOME OF THE BARRIERS YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR JOURNEY TO LEADERSHIP?

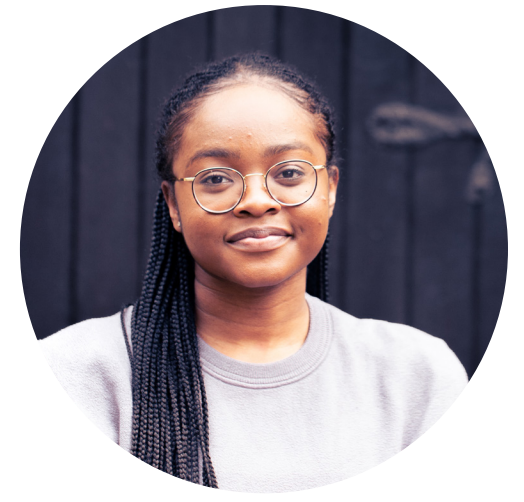
In 2014 I found myself accidentally part of the Anglican church on a gap year. I started to feel called to church leadership but didn't see many females, and definitely didn't see any of an ethnic minority. This was quite discouraging and made me question if I really felt called.

HOW HAS THE PETER STREAM HELPED?

Being part of the Peter Stream has been like being part of a small family all discerning and discussing things together. We have spoken about racism in the UK, in the church, and the barriers to leadership that those of ethnic minorities feel. We've spoken about class, education, all the way down to what it means to be a mum who feels called to ordination. It has been a safe space to figure all of this out together and that has been the biggest support for me.

DESCRIBE THE CHURCH YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

In five years, I would love to be leading a church that is diverse in its leadership team, staff team, congregation, and the way we worship. It would reflect the community it is part of and meet genuine needs in the community. I'd love it to be the first place people think to turn to when celebrating big life events, and the first place to run to in a crisis. Ultimately I want it to ooze the love of God in an infectious way that those who hated or were hurt by the church, can feel welcomed and love it again.



Kaosidi Nwankwo

WHAT HAS BEEN SOME OF THE BARRIERS YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR JOURNEY TO LEADERSHIP?

In my walk with God, I've discerned a specific call to leadership as a doctor and as a priest. I think the word 'bi-vocational' often causes a double take. I've faced a lot of challenges due to people's initial perception of my calling and with regards to how I intend to live this out practically, holding the tension between a 'sacred' and a 'secular' space, for example. Unfortunately, I've also experienced some stereotyping as a result of my ethnicity and age. Beyond all this, I think the most difficult barrier I've faced has been the mental barrier that led me to believe that these things limited my ability to contribute to the Church.

HOW HAS THE PETER STREAM HELPED?

It helps that the Peter Stream leaders are really intentional. They are a team that have dedicated themselves to walking alongside people with unconventional stories and are prepared to engage in the complexities of their lives. It took some support to create a clear path going forward, but through prayer and guidance, I have grown in confidence and gained real clarity regarding God's calling on my life. Being around people from different walks of life on the Peter Stream helped me see my differences as an asset and not a disadvantage. Even in seasons of uncertainty, the environment helped to foster hope and expectation for God's call on our lives. I would highly recommend the Peter Stream for people who have sensed a call to ordination but don't typically fit the mould and are facing difficulties responding to their calling in a practical way.

WHAT ARE CURRENTLY DOING NOW?

I've just started work as a doctor in South West London and will commence ordination training part-time at St Mellitus College soon. I'm excited to continue studying alongside my Peter Stream family and I aim to pursue bi-vocational work, bridging the gap between the Church and the NHS.

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