

Associate scheme 2020/21

Designed to equip full-time Bible teachers, who will faithfully and ably teach God's word to his people and his world

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says, "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (ESVUK)

For many years, St Helen's has been committed to training men and women rigorously for life-long, Bible-teaching ministry. Our associate scheme comprises Bible training, ministry experience and practical service. We are delighted to offer this Bible training in partnership with the Proclamation Trust's Cornhill Training Course, drawing on the strength of the training delivered in both places.

The St Helen's training year begins after the late August bank holiday and runs until the end of the following August.

ST HELEN'S CHURCH

St Helen's is a large, thriving church in the centre of London. We believe one thing matters: taking the time to listen to Jesus in his word. We are committed to knowing Jesus and making him known.

God says that he grows his church and achieves his purposes through his word, so our focus is on faithfully and prayerfully teaching and responding to his word in every setting—including Sunday and midweek services, small groups and one-to-one ministry.

Because of the opportunities our location provides, our ministry is particularly focused on students, young workers in their 20s and 30s, workers in the City and those from overseas studying or working in London. In every area of ministry our goal is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to those who don't yet know him and to help those who do love him to become mature disciples who can disciple others.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CORNHILL TRAINING COURSE

Associates will receive training at PT Cornhill and from staff at St Helen's. St Helen's has a close relationship—both historic and current—with the Cornhill Training Course, which is located just over a mile away from us. Many of our staff have benefited from Cornhill's training; some still help with the teaching and training there. We are delighted to partner with Cornhill as we aim, together, to grow godly full-time Bible teachers, whether church leaders, student workers, youth workers, women's workers, evangelists or missionaries. We are passionate about sending out workers to teach God's word to his people and his world.

ASSOCIATE SCHEME: AN OVERVIEW

The scheme is a full-time way of testing out one's suitability for life-long Bible-teaching ministry; it does this by providing necessary Bible-training, ministry-training and experience. It is for godly men and women with suitable teaching gifts, who are either considering or are committed to full-time ministry in the future. Between Cornhill and St Helen's, associates will grow in their understanding of Bible books and how to teach them, in understanding how the Bible fits together, and in ministry skills with people; workshop-style training will be deliberately stretching and help associates to understand a few books of the Bible in much greater depth for themselves. We will seek to develop convictions and attitudes which will equip associates for a lifetime of feeding themselves and others with God's wonderful word.

WHO IS THE ASSOCIATE SCHEME FOR?

We are looking for godly Christians, male and female, who want to serve God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. More particularly, we are looking for:

- Commitment to the Bible as God's word and our supreme authority, and eagerness to know how to study and teach it better
- Christian maturity and gifts in understanding and teaching the Bible
- Willingness to serve and take on a variety of responsibilities and tasks around the church
- Desire and ability to work as part of a team, both with other associates and the rest of the church staff and congregation
- Willingness and ability to participate in group discussion

We are not necessarily expecting everyone to be sure that full-time ministry will be their next step—the training is part of that exploration. But we do want associates to be considering and testing this seriously, willing to go into full-time ministry if it does seem to be the best way of serving the Lord; some may be pretty certain that full-time ministry is where they are headed.

To that end, some may stay only for one year, including those wanting only short-term experience; some may stay for up to three. This is decided once an associate is with us, in careful and prayerful consideration with others, a year at a time.

From the outset it is possible to apply to join us for a stand-alone year, usually year one of training. However, year two or year three can also be joined in this way, depending on previous experience, and do not have to be completed consecutively. Please see below for more visa information.

After time with us, many go straight on into full-time, paid Bible-teaching posts either in this country or abroad, or go on to study at theological college.

THE DISTINCTIVE FOCUS OF ST HELEN'S TRAINING

We hope to have at least 24 associates and, as such, for generations of like-minded future gospel-workers to train together. Each will be mentored personally in their Bible-teaching and ministry by the wider church staff.

At St Helen's, 'training' isn't just restricted to those training full-time. We hope it is part of our wider 'DNA'. As a church, we invest a lot of our resources into our small group Bible studies, and into reading the Bible widely one-to-one, particularly with students and younger workers in our congregations. We see these as key ways in which we can disciple people, help them to grow in their love for the Lord and to grow them as disciple-making disciples. Much of our training of leaders happens here—with all small group leaders having their own Bible-studies where they are encouraged in their discipleship and also trained, mentored and given regular feedback.

We trust that associates will also benefit from this training and thrive in an atmosphere where a huge number of lay-leaders are also working hard to understand God's word for themselves, learning to read and teach Bible books, teaching others and growing themselves. We long that people don't just learn 'the St Helen's line' on a particular topic, but will mine Scripture to find answers from God, growing their own convictions; we aim to give not just content from the Bible, but the skills and attitudes to keep people growing and being reformed by God long after they've left us.

We are a big church, so associates will have the benefit of seeing ministry happening across the age-range and different constituent groups within it. They will see how we are trying to reach our 'parish' (the workplaces around us) and how we try to partner and support gospel work further afield in the UK and overseas. Associates will be based in one team (within the wider staff team) which focuses on discipling a particular group in the church family, eg students, younger workers, or those from overseas. This will mean that each associate can genuinely get to know and be known by the church family.

CONTENT OF THE ASSOCIATE SCHEME

There are three elements to the scheme:

1. Bible training

This will happen over two days a week—one at Cornhill and one at St Helen's.

a) Cornhill

Cornhill Foundation (F1) will give a good, general foundation, covering a range of Bible books, biblical theology, some doctrine, and aspects of ministry practice and Christian character. Central to F1's curriculum is the weekly teaching groups, where participants regularly deliver short talks and receive feedback.

Cornhill Foundation (F2) explores different Bible genres and has further teaching practice. The Cornhill course is deliberately flexible: for those who have already completed a year of ministry training at a regional course, it may be possible to enter at F2.

As with the St Helen's component of training, Cornhill years F1 and F2 do not have to be completed consecutively and can be accessed as 'stand-alone' years.

For more information about Cornhill, please see their website:

www.proctrust.org.uk/proclaimer/cornhill/

b) St Helen's

Associates will spend another day per week attending and preparing for our own in-house training session. Where Cornhill F1 provides a good, general foundation, our in-house training session will aim to add significant focus and depth. The training will take place in seminar groups – similar to those in Cornhill CORE (which typically follows F1 and F2). We will focus on working really hard on a few Bible books, with high expectations for associates' own preparation and participation in discussion. For example, some of our current year one associates are studying Philippians, Malachi and 2 Corinthians in this way. In addition, our experienced Bible teachers will give input on other Bible books, giving a window into their own thinking and decision-making as they study and prepare to preach.

If associates have completed F2, they may be invited to join Cornhill CORE; additional training at St Helen's may also be available.

Associates will receive further extensive training in Bible-handling and ministry alongside our small-group leaders. All small-group leaders attend leaders' Bible studies on a weekly or fortnightly basis, as well as training and leaders' weekends, and receive training and feedback in leading Bible studies and discipling group members. Further training is provided on a less structured basis through discussions with other St Helen's staff and through the St Helen's meetings on Sundays and mid-week and in the weekly staff meetings.

It is possible to gain some specific ministry training for either children's work or teaching the Bible in a cross-cultural setting – from other St Helen's staff. This is arranged in discussion with each associate and their Ministry Supervisor.

2. Ministry experience

The best way to learn how to do Christian ministry is actually to do it. Therefore, associates spend significant time in hands-on ministry and receive guidance and feedback as they do this.

Ministry opportunities include:

- Leading a Bible study group

Associates will normally lead at least one Bible-study group which will usually meet weekly during our terms (which are slightly longer than university academic terms). Leading a Bible-study group involves leading the study on alternate weeks and helping to disciple group members of the same sex. Preparation is essential to ensure that associates have heard God speak to them and so can work out the best way to help their group members hear God speak. Associates also attend up to five weekends away a year (as part of the small-group programme) and the monthly church family prayer supper. Sunday services are also key times for informal ministry.

- Studying the Bible one-to-one

Associates are encouraged to study the Bible one-to-one with two to four people on a weekly basis—either to introduce someone to Christ or to help someone grow in their discipleship.

- Developing a ministry area

We encourage each associate to be proactive and play a part in the wider ministry of the team to which they belong. This may mean helping to develop outreach and ministry to a particular group of people, or improving an area of the team's current ministry.

Ministry opportunities in a church can change at quite short notice, and associates may be given opportunities to take on different or additional ministry responsibilities during the course of the year. Alongside ministry at St Helen's, we encourage associates to serve on a children or young people's camp; we also aim for each associate to serve at a university mission week.

3. Practical service

This is a vital, if not very glamorous, part of the scheme which enables much of the gospel ministry in St Helen's to happen. On average, in year one, associates will spend about eight hours every week preparing the buildings for meetings (which involves moving furniture and cleaning), operating the AV system, etc. As well as serving, it is also a valuable opportunity to learn what's needed behind the scenes in gospel ministry. Those in years two or three may take on more administrative roles, such as supporting the running of a Bible-study group evening.

Practical work helps associates to grow in three main ways:

1. It develops a servant heart, which is vital for long-term Christian service
2. It teaches what is involved in running a church and enabling gospel ministry to happen
3. It teaches associates to work as part of a team.

MENTORING AND SUPERVISION

We work hard to ensure every associate is mentored and supervised appropriately so that they really grow as a result of their time with us and serve as effectively as possible. Each associate is assigned a personal supervisor (normally a more senior member of staff) who oversees and helps the associate with their ministry and who has pastoral responsibility for them. Individuals differ, and circumstances change, so associates are mentored more or less closely depending on the needs of the person. This is in addition to mentoring received at Cornhill (which happens in years two and three only).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Financial support

As volunteers, associates are responsible for raising their own support. This can be a challenge and so we aim to help associates in various ways: we give advice on how to raise funding and details of some Christian Trusts that give grants to those training in this way. Associates can also apply to the St Helen's PCC for a subsistence grant to make up any shortfall in what they have been able to raise.

Raising finance is an important part of Christian ministry. Our experience is that it is a great encouragement for associates to receive prayer and financial support from those who know them well and recognise in them the gifts and opportunities that God has given them to serve him.

Accommodation

All single associates can apply to live in accommodation with others on the scheme. These are single-sex houses or flats with rent below current market level (around £4,800 per room for 12 months; market rent can be up to £7,000–8,000 per room). We usually have no accommodation suitable for married couples, but we can often put incoming couples in contact with the private landlords of married associates or staff who are moving on.

Visas

Many men and women have come from overseas to join us over the years. Those from outside the European Economic Area may be eligible to apply for a Tier 5 visa, if they have not held a similar visa in the previous 12 months. Some associates may be eligible to apply for the charity worker visa for one year; some may be able to apply for the youth mobility visa. An associate's spouse and family may apply to join the associate as dependants. More information about visas can be found at:

www.gov.uk/tier-5-temporary-worker-charity-worker-visa or
www.gov.uk/tier-5-youth-mobility

Visas will be discussed at interview and details about the visa application process will be sent upon acceptance of a place.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

If the associate scheme sounds like it could be a good fit, we'd love to hear from you!

Interviews for the next academic year begin in late November. The deadline for applications is the end of February but applications can be considered after this time if there is still space.

If you have any questions, please email associatescheme@st-helens.org.uk

Last updated 30/10/19