

St Helen's associate scheme 2021/22

Equipping full-time Bible teachers whose passion is to teach God's word faithfully and ably 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 lifelong Bible-teaching ministry. Our associate scheme consists of Bible training, ministry experience and practical service. We are delighted to offer St Helen's Bible training in partnership with the PT Cornhill Training Course, drawing on the strengths of the training delivered in both places.

This brochure contains information on the following:

1. Overview of the scheme
2. Content of the scheme
3. Our distinctive focus
4. After the scheme
5. Practical support
6. Who can apply?
7. How to apply

Overview of the scheme

What is St Helen's like? St Helen's is a large, thriving church in the City of London. We believe that one thing matters: taking the time to listen to Jesus in his Word – and so we are committed to knowing Jesus and making him known. Our goal in every area of ministry is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to those who do not yet know him and to help those who love him to become mature disciples who, in turn, can disciple others.

What is the scheme? The scheme provides Bible teaching training, ministry training and ministry experience. Through our training, we seek to develop convictions and attitudes which will prepare associates for a lifetime of feeding themselves and others with God's wonderful word.

Who is it for? The associate scheme is for those who are considering or are committed to full-time Bible-teaching in the future.

Why do the scheme? The scheme is a way of testing out one's suitability for lifelong Bible-teaching ministry in a full-time setting. This is done through rigorous Bible training, gaining experience in ministry, and regular feedback from dedicated supervisors.

Where does it happen? Training is conducted between PT Cornhill and in-house St Helen's training sessions. By learning through both channels, associates will grow in their understanding of Bible books, learn how to study and teach them, and understand how the Bible fits together.

What is training like? The workshop-style training we offer at St Helen's is deliberately stretching. It helps associates to understand a few books of the Bible in great depth for themselves.

When does it run? The training year at St Helen's begins after the late August bank holiday and runs until the end of the following August.

Who can I serve at St Helen's? 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, as well as students and workers from overseas.

Content of the scheme

1. BIBLE TRAINING

Training at Cornhill

St Helen's has a close historic and current relationship with the Cornhill Training Course, which is located just over a mile away from St Helen's. (Due to COVID-19 restrictions, teaching is currently conducted online for the academic year 2020/21.)

The first year of the course is called Cornhill Foundation One (F1). This establishes a good, general foundation for ministry by covering a range of Bible books, biblical theology, doctrine, aspects of ministry practice, and Christian character. It also involves weekly teaching practice groups where participants regularly deliver short talks and receive feedback. These sessions are central to the curriculum of F1. Most associates who join us begin by studying the F1 course.

The second year of the course is called Cornhill Foundation Two (F2). This explores different Bible genres and contains further teaching practice, sharpening the skills and convictions gained from F1.

The Cornhill Training Course is deliberately flexible. For those who have already completed a year of ministry training at a regional course, it may be possible to enrol at the F2 level. If an associate has already completed F2, they may be invited to join Cornhill CORE, the third year of the course, with the possibility of further training at St Helen's. Cornhill courses F1 and F2 do not have to be completed consecutively and can be accessed as 'stand-alone' years. For F1 and F2, associates spend one day a week studying the course. The CORE course requires two days per week. This is in addition to time spent preparing for lectures and teaching practice.

For more information about Cornhill, please visit their website: www.proctrust.org.uk/proclaimer/cornhill/

Training at St Helen's

Associates will spend another day every week attending in-house training sessions. While Cornhill F1 provides a good, general foundation, our in-house training sessions will aim to add significant focus and depth.

The training will take place in seminar groups. We focus on a few select Bible books and set high expectations for preparation and participation in discussion. Some of our current first-year associates are studying Philippians, Malachi and 2 Corinthians in this way.

Associates will receive training alongside small group leaders in Bible handling and ministry. All small group leaders attend their own Bible studies for themselves on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Small group leaders have Bible studies of their own where they are encouraged in their discipleship, as well as being trained, mentored, and given regular feedback on their ministry. There are also up to five weekends away in a year as part of the small group leaders' programme and commitment to the monthly church family prayer supper is also expected.

Further training is provided on a less structured basis through discussions with other staff and at St Helen's services and staff meetings.

Specific ministry training can be offered for either children's or youth work or teaching the Bible in a cross-cultural setting. This is arranged in discussion with an associate's ministry supervisor.

2. MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

The best way to learn how to do Christian ministry is to do it, and so associates spend a significant amount of time engaged in hands-on ministry and receive regular guidance and feedback.

Leading a Bible study group

Associates will normally lead at least one Bible study small group, usually with a co-leader. These groups 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. Sunday services are also key times for informal ministry with small group members. Preparation throughout the week for the study is essential to ensure that associates have heard God speak to them so that they can work out the best way to help group members hear God speak in turn.

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. This is so that they can introduce someone to Christ, help someone grow as a disciple and to train others in this ministry.

Developing a ministry area

We encourage each associate to 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 or improving an existing area of current ministry. Ministry opportunities in a church can change at short notice, and associates may be given opportunities to take on additional ministry responsibilities during the year.

External opportunities

Alongside ministry at St Helen's, we encourage associates to serve on a children or young people's camp, which normally run in the Easter and Christmas periods. We would also like each associate to serve at a university mission week, where Christian Unions at universities host evangelistic events for students.

3. PRACTICAL SERVICE

Although it is not very glamorous, practical service is a vital part of the scheme which enables much of St Helen's gospel ministry to happen. It develops a servant heart which is vital for long-term Christian service and teaches associates to work as part of a team. As well as being a way of serving the church, practical service is also a valuable opportunity to learn what is needed behind the scenes in gospel ministry.

On average, associates spend about eight hours every week preparing the buildings for meetings during the first year of the scheme. This involves moving furniture, cleaning, operating the AV system, and other miscellaneous practical tasks. Those in the second and third year of the scheme may take on administrative roles as part of their practical service. This usually involves helping with the logistics of running a Bible study evening.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF AN ASSOCIATE

Here is what a typical week might look like for a first-year associate:

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| Sunday: | Two services, with time in between to catch up with church members, read the Bible one-to-one with small group members, and lead youth/children's groups. |
| Monday: | Full day of lectures, seminars, and teaching practice at the Cornhill Training Course. |
| Tuesday: | In-house morning training session, studying Philippians, followed by staff meetings and practical work around the church buildings. |
| Wednesday: | Lots of time spent preparing for next week's training session in private study, one-to-ones, and leading a small group Bible study in the evening. |
| Thursday: | Supervision with ministry supervisor, more time in study, and SLOBS (Small group Leaders' Own Bible Study). |
| Friday: | Practical work to reset the church for Sunday, prayer meeting with the ministry area team, and dinner with non-Christian neighbours/friends. |
| Saturday: | Day Off! Time to rest well in preparation for another busy week. |

Distinctives of our scheme

We hope to train a generation of like-minded future gospel workers every year and expect to have at least 24 associates training with us at any time. In a large cohort, associates have the opportunity to serve with and learn from each other through mutual encouragement and sharpening.

Training expectations

We long that associates would not just learn the 'St Helen's line' on a particular topic. Rather, we hope they would mine the Scriptures to find answers from God and grow in their own convictions. We aim not just to pass on intellectual content from the Bible, but also to nurture the skills and attitudes necessary to keep associates growing and being reformed by God long after they finish the scheme.

Mentoring and supervision

Each associate is supervised personally, normally by a more senior member of staff. We work hard to ensure that every associate is mentored so that they grow and serve as effectively as possible. The supervisor oversees and helps the associate with their ministry and has pastoral responsibility for them. As individuals differ and circumstances change, associates are mentored with according frequency depending on their needs. This is in addition to any mentoring received as part of Cornhill F2 and CORE.

Ministry area

We expect that each associate can genuinely get to know and be known by the church family. Outside of formal training, the ministry of our associates is based in one of our ministry teams. Each ministry team focuses on discipling a particular group in the church family, such as university students, young workers, or those from overseas. St Helen's is a large church, so associates have the benefit of seeing ministry happening across different ages and different constituent groups within them. As part of the staff team, associates can see how we seek to reach our 'parish' (workplaces in the City of London) and how we partner with and support gospel work in the UK and overseas.

Every-member ministry

At St Helen's, we believe 'ministry training' is not just restricted to those training in a full-time capacity. Every Christian is a full-time minister of the gospel. So, as a church, we invest many of our resources into small group and one-to-one Bible studies, particularly with students and young workers in our congregations. They are ideal for helping all of us grow personally in our love and knowledge of Jesus, and in equipping us to be disciple-making disciples. We trust that associates will thrive in an atmosphere with a huge number of lay leaders who are also working hard to understand God's word, learning to read and teach Bible books, and growing in their love of the Lord.

Duration

We are not necessarily expecting that everyone who joins the scheme will be committed to full-time Bible teaching as their next step. The training we offer is part of that exploration. However, we want associates to consider seriously the possibility of going into full-time Bible teaching if it seems to be the best way of serving the Lord. Some may already be certain that full-time Bible teaching is where they are headed from the outset.

The duration of the scheme is determined in careful and prayerful consideration with supervisors once an associate begins their training with us, one year at a time. To that end, some associates stay with us for only one year, including those who only want a short-term experience. Depending on previous experience, the second and third year of training can each be joined as a stand-alone year and do not have to be completed consecutively.

After the scheme

After completing the scheme, many associates move on to work in full-time paid Bible-teaching posts in the UK and abroad. These include church leaders, student workers, youth workers, women's workers, evangelists, and missionaries. Others go on to further theological study after the scheme, and some may return to the workplace for a few years before returning for more training.

Practical support

Financial support

As volunteers, associates are responsible for raising their own financial support. We understand that this can be a challenge, so we aim to help our associates by giving advice on how to raise funding and providing details of Christian trusts that give grants to Bible teachers. Associates can also apply to the St Helen's PCC for a subsistence grant to make up any shortfall which they have been unable to raise themselves.

Raising finances is an important part of Christian ministry. Receiving financial support and support in prayer is a great encouragement for associates and is a recognition of 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. However, we are often able to put incoming couples in contact with private landlords of married associates or staff members who are moving away.

Visas

Over the years, many associates have come to train with us from overseas. Currently, 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. Others may be able to apply for the youth mobility visa. An associate's spouse and family may also apply to join the associate as dependants.

If you are applying from within the EEA, we will update our information and support applicants as best we can if any changes occur after 1 January 2021, when the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU ends.

More information about visas can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-5-temporary-worker-charity-worker-visa and www.gov.uk/tier-5-youth-mobility

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

Who can apply?

We are looking for godly Christian men and women who want to serve God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who apply should either be considering or committed to full-time Bible-teaching in the future.

They should fulfil the following requirements:

- Commitment to the Bible as God's word and our supreme authority
- Eagerness to know how to study and teach the Bible 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

How to apply

If the associate scheme sounds like it could be a good fit, we would be delighted to hear from you!

Interviews for the next academic year (2021/22) begin in late November 2020. The deadline for applications is the end of February 2021, but applications may still be considered after this time if space is available.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact the associate scheme administrator (associatescheme@st-helens.org.uk).

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