

Episcopal Campus Ministry in Eugene, Oregon

Who are we?

The Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM) in Eugene, Oregon is a diocesan ministry. Eugene is home to the University of Oregon (UO), one of the state's largest public universities, and the campus ministry house is located very close to the UO campus. Many of its participants are UO students, although ECM is open to any college student in the city, and often has students who attend Lane Community College or Northwest Christian University (soon to be known as Bushnell University).



The primary purpose of ECM is to help students from a variety of backgrounds in their Christian formation. We do this in the tradition of the Episcopal Church, and in the spirit of that tradition, welcome students from all backgrounds and faith traditions who want to explore their relationship with God, discern their purpose and callings as they enter the adult world, and engage with others in community and worship. We do this in a few different ways:

Intentional Christian Community

ECM provides housing to a small group of students each year. The campus ministry house has five bedrooms available for rent, with shared living and kitchen spaces. Students who live as part of this community are able to take advantage of close proximity to the UO and affordable rent in a part of Eugene that can often be expensive. In return, we ask them to participate in the activities that take place in the house and live as part of a community grounded in the Episcopal tradition.

Outreach

For many years, ECM has run a student food pantry out of a garage located on our property. This food pantry gets the majority of its food from FOOD for Lane County, although this is supplemented with other donations, and provides food to anyone with a student ID card. The increasing costs associated with pursuing higher education have unfortunately led to increasing need for this ministry, but ECM has recently been able to partner more closely with the UO and other religious organizations to move to a larger space nearby. The move was complete in June 2020.

Pastoral Care and Worship

The ECM Chaplain leads a weekly communal meal and worship service on Thursday evenings during the academic year, open to any students who want to participate. In addition, the chaplain spends time providing more individual pastoral care, support, and guidance to students, especially those living in the ECM house. The chaplain also supports students in maintaining relationships with their home churches as well as facilitating the participation of other Episcopal churches in the Eugene-Springfield area.

What are we trying to be?

While maintaining these elements of our ministry, we would like to grow in the area of Christian Formation. We want to do more to intentionally help students deepen their faith as they seek to follow Jesus and walk in the way of love. Two pressing questions that every college student asks are “Who am I?” and “What am I going to do with my life?” We want to find new ways to help students find answers to those questions, or at least explore them more richly and with a particular religious lens. We also want to raise other important questions like “Whose am I?” The Board recently increased money in the budget to help fund these efforts.



In this particular moment in time, we also want to be able to focus on helping our students build resilience in a changing world and successfully navigate the transitions it requires. As with all Episcopal churches and ministries, ECM shifted the format of its ministry and fellowship to an online format in response to the global pandemic, but we recognize that this is a time when students need connection and support more than ever. We also want to be able to help equip students to walk in the way of love especially in a world that has yet to fully address or take steps to end racially motivated violence and bigotry.

Who do we need?

The person we need to lead this ministry is someone who, first and foremost, is interested in and excited about formation for young adults. This is a unique time in their lives, where they are often entering the adult world for the first time, and this ministry has the potential to serve as the foundation for their religious lives for years to come.

We need someone who is organized, flexible, and energized by change, since the reality of providing pastoral care to a group of college students means responding to and supporting an ever-evolving group of people who are focused on their educations and often involved in a lot of different activities. The ministry changes yearly, quarterly even, as students come and go.



We need someone who is creative, and able to find ways to connect with a group of students whose life experiences are often not what anyone in the Episcopal Church has been used to.

We need someone who is able to think about the big-picture, long-term goals of the ministry, even when the work itself is focused on short-term needs.

We need someone who is able to foster a spirit of collaboration, especially with local parishes. The more ECM is able to work with and encourage the involvement of Episcopalians in the community, the more the students will have the benefit of their experiences, time, and resources.

Finances and Oversight

The ECM is a collaborative effort of all Eugene-Springfield Episcopal churches (St. Matthew's, St. Thomas, Resurrection, St. Mary's, and St. John the Divine), although direct oversight is provided by St. Mary's. The Rector of St. Mary's is a member of the ECM board, and we try to incorporate board members from as many area churches as possible. Our current board consists of members from a majority of area churches, a student who lives in the ECM house, and members affiliated with the UO. The board also has a treasurer who reports regularly on the ministry's income, expenditures, and assets, and assists with preparing the annual budget request.

The ECM Chaplain is officially an employee of St. Mary's, under the oversight of the Rector, but this work is done collaboratively with the ECM board. The Chaplain and Board make decisions on specific expenditures and the direction of ministry programs and activities. The chaplain meets with the Rector on an as-needed basis, and meets with the board every other month. St. Mary's office staff provides support in managing the ministry's finances, including assisting with paying bills and accepting donations.

The majority of ECM's income comes from the Diocesan budget in the form of monthly payments. The other significant source of regular income for the ministry is rental fees for the five rooms in the ECM house. Our current budget includes line items for the upkeep of the house (utilities, maintenance, and property taxes), salary and benefits for a part-time chaplain, and funds for student formation and fellowship (including weekly dinners). Over the past few years, this ministry has been able to stay within the established budget and set aside reserve funds in the Diocesan Investment Fund.

Funds for the Student Food Pantry are separate from the general operating budget for the ministry. The food pantry has received donations from a variety of organizations in the area, both faith-based and secular, as well as individual donations. Most of the food that is distributed comes from FOOD for Lane County directly.



We invite you to visit www.stmatthewseugene.com to view more information and to find the documents needed for the application process. Please send the completed application packet to Canon Neysa Ellgren Shepley at neysae@diocese-oregon.org

