

St. Peter's Anglican Church  
4784 Thomasville Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32309  
[www.stpeters.fl.com](http://www.stpeters.fl.com)

## DISCOVERING THE LANGUAGE OF VOCATION

By Father Nicholas Krause

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During the summer of 2013, St. Peter's Anglican Church was kind enough to host me as a **Charles Simeon Fellow**. I had just finished my first year in the Master of Divinity program at Duke University Divinity School and I found myself in a season of discernment regarding my vocational calling. The hospitality and training that St. Peter's Anglican Church offered to me, through those summer months were, I believe, one of the greatest gifts a young seminarian can receive.

From my first day, through my last Sunday, St. Peter's Anglican Church welcomed me into a wide range of ministries, projects, and activities of parish life. I began to cultivate a whole new repertoire of skills and experiences that I have carried with me into my ministry today.

I spent a significant amount of my time, during the program, in **teaching ministries**. Especially formative, for me, was the project of teaching an eight-week course in "Christian Ethics" in the parish. Through this class, I became acquainted with the dynamics of teaching theology in a parish setting and learned the difficult skills of translating academic theology into the language and concerns of everyday life.

In addition to this, I spent much of my summer learning and becoming familiar with the ins-and-outs of **liturgical practice**. Throughout the summer, the clergy placed me in nearly every liturgical role: I became familiar with a whole range of liturgical responsibilities and actions that occur within a Sunday Worship Service. I sat in and participated in liturgy planning meetings and I learned how to organize, structure, and coordinate liturgies for different occasions. This liturgical formation was crucial for me, as it allowed me to acquire the liturgical skills and know-how that one simply cannot learn in the classroom: one learns only through routine liturgical practice.

Finally, my time as a Charles Simeon Fellow pushed me and stretched me in areas in which I needed to grow, regarding **pastoral ministry**. Through leading Vacation Bible School, accompanying clergy on pastoral visits, and other activities, I found myself learning and developing new skills "on the ground," so to speak, by immersing myself in new pastoral roles.

*The single most important gift St. Peter's and the Charles Simeon Institute gave to me, however, was the gift of discerning my vocational calling.*

**What makes the Charles Simeon Institute special and an immensely important institution in the life of the Anglican Church in North America, is the way it helps men and women discern the calling of God on their lives, understand the particular shape of that calling, and begin to acquire the requisite skills, gifts, and habits necessary to sustain them in that vocational calling.**

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The reason this is so important is that, as Christians, we believe in the work of the Holy Spirit, in and through the Church, to accomplish this work. The process of discernment, formation, and training for ministry belongs primarily not to individuals, seminaries, or divinity schools -- but to *churches*.

The Charles Simeon Institute provides exactly this context for the **formation** of future clergy and church leaders. As fellows pray, contemplate, and speak with mentors about their vocational callings, they do so within the context of the Church's ongoing life of prayer, worship, service, and mission. The clergy assigns the fellows a wide variety of ministerial projects and responsibilities, as well as the reflective space to consider, alongside mentors, parishioners, and clergy, their particular strengths, weaknesses, gifts, and passions. Fellows *learn by doing* and thus discover their place in the Church's ministry by trial-and-error, by practice and repetition, and by learning the craft of ministry from master craftsmen and women.

For me, the Summer Fellows Program helped me to discover and understand my **vocational calling** as a "scholar-priest" or as a "pastor-theologian." More specifically, my time as a fellow provided me with the *language* to understand the vocation to which God was calling me. I once heard Susan Pendleton Jones — former Associate Dean for Ministerial Formation at Duke Divinity School and friend of the Charles Simeon Institute — refer to this as the process of "discovering the language of our vocations." I think that is exactly what my time at St. Peter's Anglican Church did for me. Through the mentorship of people like Father Michael Petty, the communal theological reflection of my parish discernment team, the experiences of teaching and preaching, and countless rich and challenging conversations, I was able to *name* and to articulate with precision and clarity the shape and form of the vocation God was calling me to pursue, as a servant of God's Church. I learned the vocabulary to understand and articulate my place in God's Church.

Today, I am pursuing this **vocation** as a "scholar-priest" in Waco, Texas, where I am both working on a Ph.D. in Theology and Ethics at Baylor University and serving as Assisting Priest at Christ Church Anglican, Waco. I'm continuing to learn what it means to work at the intersection of the Church and the University, to teach and produce theological work for the sake of the Church, and to be a servant and steward of the Church's intellectual tradition and ongoing task of theological reflection. I'm learning what it means to be a scholar of Christian moral theology *and* a pastor aiding Christians in moral discernment and deliberation. I'm learning what it means to be a diligent and earnest researcher and writer *and* a maker of Christian disciples. St. Peter's Anglican Church and the Charles Simeon Institute equipped me with the tools and skills necessary for continually discovering how to live into and perform this vocational calling. I'm thankful for the language they gave me for the discovery of my vocation. May God bless St. Peter's Anglican Church and the Charles Simeon Institute: in the ongoing work of training, forming, and preparing young clergy like me for the work of God's beloved Church.