



Preparing for St Padarn's

Congratulations on being sponsored for training for ministry! We are delighted to be sharing with you on the next few years of your journey and your preparation for the ministry God is calling you to.

It is normal to feel anxious – but we have all been there, and we are here to help. You will find that the other candidates are very friendly and supportive, as are the tutors! In fact, we would rather know of problems earlier rather than later, so if you're wondering about contacting someone in case something seems trivial, please don't worry, just get in touch. We want you to feel happy and comfortable as you progress in your formation and our role is to support you as much as we can.

If you would like to do some preparatory reading, then here are some suggestions. To be honest though we would also encourage you to take the time before training to relax and enjoy being with your family and friends and to think carefully about your priorities and what you might need to give up in order to make the most out of this period of training and still find time for the important relationships in your life.

What is most important?

Pray

This time of training is about setting up good practices of prayer that will sustain your ministry.

Invest in your relationships and yourself

Entering a period of formation for ministry can put strain on our relationships and transition is always draining and stressful. Do all you can to avoid 'arriving' at St Padarn's stressed and exhausted. Remember that your family and close friends will also be adjusting as you move into a ministerial role. Be gentle with them!

Read the Bible

Most of you are training for ministries that involve preaching and teaching the faith so it is essential you come to know the Bible well. We suggest that you aim to read the whole Bible systematically in our first two years with us. Why not start now? If you are looking for suggestions, reading (or re-reading) these four books will be a great start:

- ✓ The Gospel of Mark
- ✓ The Epistle to the Galatians
- ✓ The Book of Genesis
- ✓ The Book of Isaiah



Mark's Gospel can be read in an evening, as can Galatians. Genesis will take several evenings (stop after chapter 11 on the first evening) and Isaiah will take about a week (natural breaks come after Chapter 39 and Chapter 55).

You will want to read in an up-to-date translation of the Bible. There are many around, but we would recommend the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and in Welsh y Beibl Cymraeg Newydd (argraff ddiwygiedig 2004). There are also many versions on audiobook.

Four suggested books

To stimulate your thinking about the bible in an accessible way, try the Principal's latest book:

- Jeremy Duff, Peter's Preaching: The Message of Mark's Gospel (BRF, 2015)
- or even Paula Gooder's Phoebe (Hodder and Stoughton, 2018).

To give you a good overview of the whole 'package' of ministerial formation and theological education:

- Steven Croft and Roger Walton, Learning for Ministry (Church House Publishing, 2005)

If you are not confident in your academic ability and/or lack experience of academic study, then a good tool for thinking about all sorts of 'study skills' is:

- Stella Cottrell, The Study Skills Handbook (3rd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Tips

- We will be giving you lots of information. You will not remember everything. If anything is unclear, ask! If something is really important, we will keep reminding you.
- Put all the key dates in your diary.
- Do prioritise getting to know your diocesan tutor – this is a key relationship for your period of training.
- If you are struggling with your confidence, read up a little on impostor syndrome. <https://redditblog.com/2015/11/25/impostor-syndrome-youre-not-the-only-one-who-feels-like-a-fraud/>
It seems that these feelings are common.... Even your tutors feel them, believe it or not!
- Be open and curious... you can learn something from every experience. You will all arrive with a huge variety of experience and a lot of your learning will happen as you share your knowledge and experiences with each other as much as what you will learn in any classroom.



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- And similarly, be prepared to be surprised. You are starting out on a journey and with God, we don't always know where journeys will end!

I am however very much looking forward to sharing this journey with you.

Pob bendith,

Manon

Manon Ceridwen James (Revd Dr)

