

<http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/australis-certificate-of-ministry/>

Learning Communities around Bible, Church and Mission

The Australis Certificate of Ministry equips people to reflect on their faith, ministry and discipleship in the context of their everyday lives as part of a community of learners.

There are six study units in the course. Units are conducted in small groups facilitated by a qualified tutor. The Bendigo Anglican Diocese awards the Australis Certificate of Ministry to students who complete the six units of study.

The course was originally developed by the Diocese of Lichfield Board of Ministry. It was brought to Australia by Bishop Andrew Curnow of Bendigo, where it was edited and contextualised by Dr Charles Sherlock and administered by Trinity Theological School (Melbourne). It was known as the Trinity Certificate for sixteen years before the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo took responsibility for the next phase in its development. The Rev Dr Margaret Wesley is now responsible for administering and updating the *Australis Certificate of Ministry*.

To date, more than 1,000 people in the dioceses of North Queensland, Brisbane, Sydney, Bathurst, Wangaratta, Bendigo, Ballarat, Melbourne and New Zealand have completed one or more of these units towards the certificate. A number of regions are using the Certificate as part of their Local Ordained Ministry training.

What is Australis?

The Australis Certificate of Ministry empowers you to teach and train your parish members with minimal preparation time. Everything has been prepared for you. The Facilitator Manual (available on the web site) helps you to think through your role as a facilitator.

Australis is ...

- **Parish based.** Working through this course together will support the ministry of your parish by enhancing community and co-operation while building members' confidence in handling the Bible and articulating their faith. A strength of this course is its emphasis on interactive education, hearing other perspectives and learning from each other.
- **Solid training** in Bible, church and ministry from a broad Anglican perspective.
- **Accessible** education without being too academically challenging. It is for everyone wanting a better grounding in Christian faith and practice. It does not take a specific perspective on theology or churchmanship and will enable each student to appreciate the perspectives of others.
- Used in **Preparation for ministry** in the Anglican Church for lay people and some ordained local ministers (OLM's).
- Used throughout **Australia and New Zealand**. More than 1,000 people have enriched their understanding and practice of their faith by studying this course together.

Who is the Certificate designed for?

The Certificate course is ideal for anybody who wishes to learn about and deepen their faith. Current students include:

- ✓ Christians wishing to [explore issues of faith](#) and church
- ✓ people involved in [worship and music ministries](#)
- ✓ [retirees](#) who wish to study in new leisure time
- ✓ people testing their [vocation](#)
- ✓ members of parish [pastoral teams](#)
- ✓ people engaged in [Church agencies and welfare organisations](#).

Australis Certificate has an Australian Anglican “flavour”, most obvious in Unit 4 but present throughout. Students from all backgrounds who can sit comfortably with that perspective are welcome and are never expected or required to agree. Spirited discussion is always encouraged!

Australis Certificate of Ministry Units

[Experiencing Christian Faith](#): How do we experience Christian faith through praying, using the Bible, singing, worship, story and discipleship?

[User’s Guide to the Old Testament](#): How do stories, wisdom and instructions from the distant past help us to live as God’s people in twenty first century Australia.

[User’s Guide to the New Testament](#): Learning from the beginnings of Christianity about believing, worshipping and living as God’s people today.

[The Anglican Church – Our Story](#): Explore how the Christian gospel reached the British Isles, how the Church of England was formed and how the Anglican Church has influenced Australia’s history.

[Confessing our Faith](#): What do I believe and how can I express my faith more clearly?

[Serving Christ Today](#): How do we live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our lifestyle, mission, stewardship & calling?

Each unit in the Certificate includes 8 or 9 sessions, involving 16 to 20 class workshop hours in total, and requiring a similar period of preparation time.

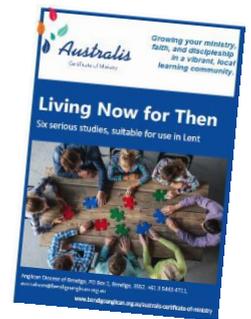
To be awarded the Australis Certificate, students must complete all 6 units. Successful completion of each unit involves attending and participating in a minimum of 80 per cent of classes and completing an assessment task (essay, journal, or creative work such as art or poetry) equivalent to an essay of 1,200–1,500 words. Students or groups are also welcome take individual units of particular interest without progressing toward the Certificate.

Getting Started - Facilitators

- ❖ Let your congregation know the course will be starting soon. Consider inviting other local churches to participate if you have small numbers from your parish. Download and distribute the brochures and fliers from the Diocesan website.
- ❖ Decide how much time you can give to your group. Will classes be weekly, fortnightly or monthly? It is up to you. Each unit covers eight or nine sessions. Each session will take about two hours. You will also need to allocate time for marking the assessment tasks.
- ❖ Decide which unit to begin with. There are advantages to working through the subjects in order, but if your group has a strong interest in studying the New Testament, there is nothing to stop you from starting at Unit 3. You might even decide to run two or three units at once.

Consider starting with a “tasting plate” by using *Living Now For Then* for your Lenten or Advent studies. This six-week series gives your church members a sample of each of the Australis units and introduces them to the format of Australis study.

- ❖ Once you have settled on class times and student numbers, contact the academic administrator about enrolling the students and ordering course books. Order your workbooks at least two weeks before you plan to start (more in remote areas) to ensure that they will get to you on time.



Getting Started – for Students

The Australis Certificate provides a framework that enables learning to happen through group discussion and interaction. When you decide to study this way, the first thing to do is find out if there is a group nearby or else start exploring the possibility of getting a group started at your church. You can email the administrator to find out about groups near you.

If you would like to study the Australis Certificate in your church, talk with your minister or other church leader about your desire to study. Give them some information about Australis and tell them you would appreciate having them as tutor. (Australis tutors need to have some theological training and some experience facilitating group discussions. Most ministers would be perfect.) Show them how to find the Tutor’s Manual on the web site.

Most ministers are busy and may need a few months’ notice before getting a group started. This will give you time to invite others to join in.

Talk to your friends and congregation members about your interest in the course. Tell them how much you would love to have them study with you. Invite widely, and don’t make assumptions about who might be interested. This course is for everyone! Offer to work with your church leaders to make posters, flyers and announcements to encourage people to join the group. You are welcome to use any of the material on the web site. Some flyers there have space so you can add your own details.

Consider your ability to commit time to the course. Each lesson requires a few hours of reading and preparation, and an assessment task is to be completed for each Unit. Assessments may be in the form of creative projects, personal reflection papers or academic essays. You will be given a selection of assessments to choose between.



Reviews

Mother Theresa Angert-Quilter

Who is Australis for?

Australis is for adults who wish to explore and consolidate ideas about their Anglican Faith and share experiences and opinions with other believers who have come for the same reasons.

How does the course operate?

We have been meeting once a week at Christ Church Cathedral on Wednesdays from 7 to 9pm

Your experience of using Australis?

The course is clearly written with helpful questions both for exploration and for marking the milestones as we complete each unit. All the participants in the course to date have found the material accessible and helpful, informative and inspirational

What materials are needed?

Workbooks are used and notes and responses are written on an exercise book, notebook or paper kept in a folder.

Is it expensive?

low cost \$60 per unit

Other comments

I find Australis to be an excellent course. It is up to date, serious and yet can be understood even by those with English as a second language or those who have not completed Highschool. Those who have a more advanced education base get a great deal out of the material and often contribute in ways that inspire the whole class.

Margaret Wesley the coordinator is a very nice person. It has been good to work with her.

Jennifer Forester

I am studying the Australis certificate with our Nelson Bay Parish Bible College group.

Les started us off last year, with the New Testament unit. He is a very good teacher and has extensive New Testament knowledge, backed up by his travels in Turkey and Israel. Ed Parker lectured us next in Old Testament. He is now taking us for the unit "Experiencing Christian Faith." This is the first unit, but for some reason we are doing them out of order. The next unit in September is "Anglicanism" and Les is leading us in that one.

We are very happy with the course material. It is very user friendly for both lecturer and students. As an experienced teacher I can also vouch for the way the course is set out and it's underlying pedagogy.

I started just attending the New Testament course because Les was teaching it. Then I got hooked because the course units are really interesting and able to be done in a very busy life. My academic background is a BA Hons in Literature and a Dip Ed, and a life lived in Sunday School, youth group, clergy wife etc, so it's not too

demanding. Others doing the course have varying degrees of Bible knowledge, and experience of Anglicanism, but find the course very accessible.

Some of us do the assessment tasks and are aiming to get the Certificate. Others do not do the assessment tasks, but do the set reading and attend the tutorials every week. Les writes extra assessment tasks that provide more options for students. He likes doing that sort of thing.

The group meeting every week is a real strength. So much better than the loneliness of much on-line study. Relationships are building up between course members, and that is creating network and strength in our church life.

Sourcing books can be a challenge, (for those not living with a Rectory Library) but there are a lot of on-line resources eg New Testament Gateway. And we share stuff.

We have only just done session two of our present unit, "Experiencing Christian Faith" and already we are making links into Bishop Peter's Strategic Directions and the changes that are taking place in the Diocese. I can see potential for more of this linking and linking into our Safe Ministry learnings and practises.

Last night we looked at the use of hymns throughout church history and how they are used private and public worship. There are many links to AAPB and how it uses the scriptures in liturgy.

Les and I think this course is comprehensive enough and accessible enough to serve as training for Lay Readers in our Diocese.

Contact

For further information contact

- the Diocesan Ministry Council through – bishopsonia@newcastleanglican.org.au
- Australis Certificate Ministry Academic Director, Margaret Wesley – australiscm@bendigoanglican.org.au.

Enrolments

For enrolments, orders, and any questions, contact the Australis Certificate of Ministry Academic Director on australiscm@bendigoanglican.org.au.