



EMORY

CANDLER  
SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY

## Candler Formation Communities 2021-2022

### Program Description

The program in Formation Communities offers Candler students an opportunity to live in a residential intentional community during their graduate studies. These communities of discernment and commitment are animated by distinct charisms that orient the rule of life of each community. Communities are organized around common prayer, meals, and celebration, and each is coordinated by a student rector who provides day-to-day leadership and a faculty chaplain who provides worship leadership and long-term guidance.

The program of formation communities is supported by a curriculum that aids communities in constructing a rule of life, events that facilitate ongoing learning, formation, and skill building, and personnel that focus on the relational and logistical needs of the houses. Some of these programming activities will necessarily focus particularly on the residents of each formation community. But ideally some of these events can serve the wider Candler student body as a wider catalyst for building skills and capacity for community.

For one perspective on life in community see: <http://candler.emory.edu/news/releases/2019/12/journeying-together-living-in-community-at-candler.html>

There are two pathways for students who wish to participate in Candler's Formation Communities, chartered and student organized formation communities.

- 1) **Candler Chartered Formation Communities:** Candler supported five formation communities in the 2020-2021 academic year, most of which will continue next year. We are actively working to add two additional communities this coming academic year.

**St. Clare House:** One formation community is located Park Avenue Baptist Church, a vibrant, multiracial, inclusive congregation in the Grant Park neighborhood. PABC is a congregation that emphasizes God's welcome for all people and has a special ministry to LGBTQIA+ members. The focus of this formation community has been on practices of inclusion and hospitality (with a healthy dose of good humor). There is space for five students in the four-bedroom, three-bathroom parsonage. There will be one shared room at \$450 per student per month, and three singles at \$525 per student per month (price includes utilities).

**St. Joseph and St. Vedast Houses:** There are two houses rooted in the rhythms of prayer commended by the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. They are located at 1968 and 2422 N. Decatur Road. Rent for these houses is \$550 per month (not including utilities). Both houses draw inspiration especially from the Episcopal daily offices. Student residents do not need to be Episcopal or Anglican to be considered, but will need to commit to the rhythms of prayer commended by the Book of Common Prayer. The houses serve as a hub for the wider Episcopal Anglican Studies Program.

**Bonhoeffer Formation Community:** This non-residential community is made up of teaching parish students who commit to a rule of life that is rooted in virtual modes of connection, prayer, and fellowship. Participants do not live together, and thus must work out their own housing arrangements. But, this formation community

is especially suited to students who are interested in exploring modes of common life and accountable spiritual practice beyond their homes.

**L'Arche Friendship House:** In partnership with L'Arche Atlanta we are exploring starting a formation community in 2021-2022. L'Arche communities have a special ministry to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are looking for houses and apartments near the intersection of Clairmont and Scott, where L'Arche is renovating a second community house. We hope to place up to five students in a formation community alongside this newly forming L'Arche community. We are still working to concretize the details on this house, so your application will be a statement of interest and we will discern the right fit together. Consistent with our other houses, we hope to identify a house or apartment with a rent of around \$550 per student per month.

**Harambee House:** In partnership with the Black Student Caucus and Black Church Studies programs, we are exploring starting a formation community in 2021-2022 focused on the needs and interests of Black students. We expect this house will be animated by the charisms of academic excellence, an orientation toward justice, and the spirituality of the Black church. We plan to look for houses and apartments either proximate to campus or on Emory shuttle lines to make sure that transportation is not an issue for residents. We are still working to concretize the details on this house, so your application will be a statement of interest and we will discern the right fit together. Consistent with our other houses, we hope to identify a house or apartment with a rent of around \$550 per student per month.

- 2) **Student Organized Formation Communities:** Students who have already formed a community of house- or room-mates are invited to apply to participate in the Formation Communities Curriculum as a cohort (each house member will need to apply individually but the applications will be considered as a group). In this case, students will organize their own housing. This option will make the most sense for students who are already living together, or who are committed to living together and looking for a house or apartment this spring or summer. While Candler does not have the institutional capacity to work out the details of this housing, we can support creating intentional community. Student organized formation communities will participate in the beginning of the year and mid-year retreats, be assigned a house chaplain, host a meeting for the clarification of thought each semester, and participate in the wider curriculum of formation. Preference will be given to applicant cohorts who display the racial, gender, denominational, and theological diversity of the Candler student body.

## Formation Communities curriculum

1. Beginning of the year retreat: The academic year for the formation communities begins with a retreat, required for all formation community residents and house chaplains. The retreat is designed to build community amongst residents, provide space and support for writing a common rule of life, and to covenant with intentions for the year ahead. This overnight retreat models the elements of the rule of life (detailed below), provides teaching about the spirituality of historic rules of the Christian tradition, and enables community members to articulate personal and collective intentions.
2. Meetings for the clarification of thought: Each formation community hosts one gathering per semester on some theme pertinent to community life in consultation with their house chaplain. Residents may prepare to present on the topic themselves or invite an outside expert to present or facilitate. These meetings will be open to all Candler students, faculty, and staff, but strongly encouraged for members of formation communities.
3. House meetings: Each formation community meets at least on a monthly basis and with ad hoc meetings as needed to discuss house issues and return to the covenant of the rule of life. These meetings are mandatory and are organized by the student rectors. House chaplains are available for support of these meetings as requested by community members.
4. Mid-year retreat: A one-day retreat marks the mid-point of the year before the beginning of the Spring semester. This retreat focuses on the practices of discernment and invites participants to a renewal of their commitment to their rule of life.

5. Closure celebration: At the closure of the year, and in keeping with the importance of celebration in the rule of life, the formation communities gather to celebrate the learnings of the year.

## **Rule of life**

Each formation community will identify its own rule of life and covenant to keep it for the year. While each rule of life is contextually suited to those in the community, they include at least commitments regarding 1) shared prayer, 2) shared table, and 3) shared celebration. Each formation community's rule of life is created during the beginning of year retreat and affirmed (or changed) at the mid-year retreat.

## **Applications**

Applications for Candler Chartered Formation Communities are due by March 15, 2021. We will notify students and student cohorts of the review committee's decision by Monday, April 1, 2021.

Applications for Student Organized Formation Communities are due by April 15, 2021. We will notify students and student cohorts of the review committee's decision by Friday, May 1, 2021.

Both applications can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/CandlerFormation2021App>

For more information contact the Director of Formation Communities  
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