



Report of the Anglican Studies Program at Iliff School of Theology to the 139th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Colorado—October 1-2, 2026

The Anglican Studies Program at Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver, is a partnership program between The Episcopal Church in Colorado and Iliff School of Theology, Denver's United Methodist Seminary, in order to offer critical formation for Episcopal MDiv (Master of Divinity) students working toward ordination in the Episcopal Church, as well as formation and enrichment for laity seeking to learn more about the Anglican Tradition and to help grow in their vocational ministries. The program hosts denominational courses in Episcopal Liturgy, Ethics, Anglican Spirituality, English Reformation (including History of the Episcopal Church), Polity and Canon Law, occasional electives, and an Anglican Colloquium specifically designed to help MDiv students in the program to integrate all the areas of Anglican Study in preparation for sitting for the General Ordination Exams (GOEs), required for ordination.

In cooperation with The Episcopal Church in Colorado, the Bishop (Bishop Kym Lucas) provides direction for the program in consultation with the Canon for Formation and Pastoral Care (Canon Greg Foraker), which is implemented at Iliff through collaboration with the bishop's appointed director of Anglican Studies (The Rev. Dr. Austin L. Leininger), Iliff's President (The Rev. Dr. Lee H. Butler, jr.), Iliff's Sr. Vice president of Academic Affairs (Dr. Albert Hernández), and Iliff's Dean of Students (The Rev. Dr. Diane Bagues).

For the past year, The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger has had the honor and privilege to serve as the Director of Anglican Studies for Iliff's Anglican Studies Program as well as teaching as Adjunct Faculty for Iliff's offerings of Anglican Studies courses.

Spring of 2026, the program offered Episcopal History and Polity, taught by The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger with guest lectures by Zane Johnson, The Rev. Tory Moir, and The Rt. Rev. Kym Lucas, Fall of 2026 the program is in the midst of offering The Episcopal Church & Contemporary Moral and Social Issues, taught by The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger with guest lectures by JK Melton.

Changes to the program over the past year included transitioning from the quarter to the semester system, which went smoothly, and the finalization of the new Episcopal Formation program for the Anglican Studies students thanks to the help of The Rev. Marc Smith, Cathie Kelsey, and Canon Greg. The program for student formation includes mentorship, liturgical participation, accountability groups for practicing spiritual disciplines, and prayer, and began implementation in September with our inaugural annual retreat and our first Quiet Day to kick off Gathering Days Week the week before Convention. The program continues to offer weekly Anglican Studies Gatherings on Thursdays both in person and on Zoom, a monthly Episcopal Eucharistic Liturgy followed by fellowship "hour" (replacing the last Thursday gathering of each month), and continues to offer Gathering Days Liturgy and Program Hosted Dinner.

Challenges for the program come from the remote nature of our Online student population. With only a few in-person students, and only some of the courses requiring Hybrid participation (i.e. mostly online with some synchronized and in person meetings during the once per semester Gathering Days week), there are few of us to gather in person, and those in other parts of the world are not in the same time-zone. Navigating these difficulties is part of the work done on a weekly basis from the Director of Anglican Studies' office on campus at Iliff School of Theology.

Long-term plans for Anglican Studies, both from the Diocese and from Iliff, include strategies to increase the number of students in the program so that we can offer two to three courses per term rather than just one. Ideally, we would all like for Anglican Studies at Iliff to be a place where laity as well as clergy-in-training can come to learn more about our tradition!

For our scholars in the diocese who would like to teach for Iliff, please reach out and contact The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger at aleininger@iliff.edu (NB: PhD's are required by Iliff for teaching all of their graduate level courses, but guest lectures can include ABD PhD students). Since The Rev. Dr. Leininger is currently teaching five out of the program's six core-denominational courses, more voices are both desired and needed to ensure a plurality of perspectives for our students in formation. In addition to Zane Johnson and The Rev. Tory Moir in Spring of 26, I'm also grateful to both The Rev. Dr. Angela Hummel and The Rev. Dr. JK Melton for guest lecturing this year as they all help us to rebuild our pool of adjunct faculty!

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger
Interim Director of Anglican Studies
Iliff School of Theology