

What is Cursillo?

Cursillo (kur SEE' yoe) is a ministry within the Episcopal Church. It provides an experience of living as part of the Beloved Community of Jesus, models a method for continuing in that sense of community, and helps Christians discover and achieve their personal calling as followers of Jesus and as leaders in ministries and in their congregations.

The three-day Cursillo Weekend experience is an introduction to the Cursillo ministry. It is a living out of our sacramentally-oriented Episcopal Church and in living the Christian faith. It is a concentrated and intensive time of discovery, especially in the area of Christian community, support, and the great love and joy that this community shares. Cursillo is a powerful spiritual experience intended to equip each person with the basic foundation to do Christ's work in the world. And it is intended to be shared. It is open to laity and clergy alike.

Cursillo is:

- *A ministry of the Episcopal Church
- *A way of life
- *A loving and growing community

The 3-Day experience is:

- *person-centered
- *a gift of love to you
- *worship, study, fellowship
- *a short course in Christian living

Cursillo is not a therapy group or group therapy. But you will have fun!

Is it a silent retreat?

No. The brief "retreat" portion of the Cursillo, during which silence is kept, lasts only from the conclusion of the opening night until after worship the following morning. Thereafter, the basic teachings of Christ are discussed in an atmosphere of joy, singing, and fun.

What is the format?

The Cursillo Weekend is a blend of seriousness and light-heartedness, of spiritual exercises and talks by lay people and clergy. Spiritual exercises include Eucharist, Morning and Evening Prayer, and other devotions.

Form and shape:

- *Thursday evening till Sunday afternoon are spent making your Cursillo Weekend.
- *A couple of weeks later there is a one-day gathering of participants, sponsors, and team that is called a "Day of Deeper Understanding/Grand Ultreya" to deepen your experience and to meet the broader Cursillo community.
- *For the rest of your life (your Fourth Day) we hope that you will meet regularly with others, for support, sharing, learning, and fun (Group Reunions and Ultreyas).

Accommodations:

Participants from all walks of life grow close to one another during the Cursillo. They pray, listen, discuss, eat, sleep, and sing together, in a family atmosphere. Furnishings may be modest, but a spirit of fellowship makes them more than adequate. There is plenty of good

food available, and every care is taken to make everyone as comfortable as possible.

Cost:

When you make your Cursillo, the cost will have already been paid by the donations of others who have attended before you.

Sponsors:

Every candidate for Cursillo needs to have a sponsor, someone who has already attended a Cursillo Weekend. But if you can't find a sponsor, email us and we will connect you with someone to fill that role.

Who makes a Cursillo?

If you are a baptized Christian and you are age 21 or over, lay or ordained, you may attend a Cursillo. Your sponsor's role is to help you prepare for the Weekend. Because it is intended to be a shared experience, it is hoped that spouses and partners will be able to attend Cursillo in the same year. But this is not necessary.

Most people's spiritual lives are enlivened as a result of Cursillo, as it is a time of physical and emotional stretching. Therefore, persons with serious physical or emotional difficulties are counseled to defer attending until more settled.

In Spanish, the full title of Cursillo is "Cursillos de Cristiandad," which means short courses of Christian living. Cursillo

originated in Spain, and has spread around the world, so retains many of the Spanish terms.

A Cursillo Weekend is, among other things, the experience of living for three days in a community of persons who are consciously trying to live as followers of Jesus. It is quite a contrast to everyday life in the world.

What makes a Cursillo a special time is that we experience Christianity in a concentrated time period (instead of in bits and pieces, spread out over a lifetime) and we actually live it (instead of just hearing about it in an abstract manner). So why is a Cursillista (kur see YEES' tuh – a person who has been to a Cursillo) so enthusiastic about the weekend? Simply because that person has experienced the fullness of Christian living in a way not usually possible in our fragmented daily lives.

Bishop Michael Hanley, former bishop of the Diocese of Oregon, praised the benefits of Cursillo, saying, “I made my Cursillo in 1981 in Oklahoma along with my wife, Marla. It was a powerful experience with the love of God in community. I recommend it to anyone interested in deepening their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. Yes, God can be encountered in many places and in many ways, but God is often most powerfully experienced in community. Cursillo provides a wonderful experience and the presence of God in community.”

Bishop Greg Rickel, formerly of the Diocese of Olympia, said, “To me, Cursillo is Christianity 101. When I made my Cursillo

over 25 years ago, I remember finding, in those grace-filled, and a bit challenging days, how much I did not know, how much I had not yet experienced about our faith. I found a depth there that has never faded.”

Former Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori wrote, “It was a profound experience of God’s love in community, and I learned much. Cursillo is an ongoing opportunity to grow – in capacity for loving action in the world, in deepened engagement in community, in awareness of God’s action in our lives, and more conscious and open relationship with God. If you are seeking MORE in your life, come and see!”

Former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, also a Cursillista, says, “When I look to see where the spirit is moving and Episcopalians are lit up with the love of Christ and each other, I know to look to Cursillo. This ministry is such a gift to the Episcopal Church, and never more than in this moment as we seek to follow our Lord’s call into the Jesus Movement.”

The next Cursillo Weekend will be held Thursday evening, March 20 to Sunday afternoon, March 23, 2025 at the Oregon Christian Convention Center in Turner, Oregon, just outside Salem. All adults are welcome.

For more information, contact:

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