

Report of the Commission on Ministry to the 132th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Colorado – October 8-10, 2020

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to equip the body of Christ for faithful ministry, and to advise the Bishop in the implementation of Title III of the Canons.

Cast of Characters:

Darren Armstrong, Holy Redeemer, Denver
Michael Boney, St. John's Cathedral, Denver
Deacon Nancey Bookstein, St. Brigit's, Frederick
Deacon Linda Brown, St. Luke's, Denver
Jessica Cox, St. Mark's, Durango, *Resigned*
The Rev. Krista Dias, Chapel of Our Saviour, Colorado Springs
The Rev. Mike Fay, Ascension, Salida
The Rev. Cesar Hernandez, Latino Missioner
The Rev. Wendy Huber, St. Barnabas, Glenwood Springs/Partnership Vicar
The Rev. Reagan Humber, House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver
The Rev. Emily Lukanich, Transfiguration, Vail
The Rev. Katie Pearson, St. John's Cathedral, Denver
Carl Peterson, All Saints', Loveland
Lena Sewell, St. Paul, Lakewood
The Rev. Jeremiah Williamson, Grace and St. Stephen's, Colorado Springs (*Chair*)
Dianne Draper, Bishop's Office (*Executive Assistant*)
The Rev. Canon Alex Dyer, Bishop's Office (*Liaison*)

Executive Summary

The work of the Commission on Ministry is both consistent and ever-changing as the needs of the Episcopal Church in Colorado change. Some of our work, such as those things we do to support the ordination process, is fairly uniform from year-to-year – although 2020 did encourage creative expression of those norms. Other work is a response to a request from the Bishop or something we as a Commission feel should be addressed in accordance with our mission to better equip and prepare the lay and ordained ministers of the diocese to do those things to which God is calling us.

Our basic tasks are organized in three areas (below in bold):

Equipping for discernment to lay or ordained ministries:

We organize an annual discernment event, *Road to Ministry*, for those exploring the calling of God on their lives

We provide a manual outlining the discernment process for an aspirant and their community

We equip for the training of congregational discernment teams

We assist the Bishop's office in staffing the annual BACOM retreat

We support the Bishop's office however needed regarding licensing for lay ministries

Overseeing ordination processes:

We see that each postulant is assigned a BOEC liaison

We assist the Bishop's office in staffing the Holy Orders retreat

We advise the Bishop on creative and effective strategies to meet canonical requirements

We support the Bishop as she discerns the future of ordained ministry in our diocese, currently that includes advising her around ecumenical possibilities and the traits we might look for in future ordained ministers

We devise the latter stages of diaconal formation

We sign off on canonically required paperwork

Supporting church professionals:

We provide annual priestly compensation guidelines

We ensure that affordable and accessible continuing education opportunities are available to both lay and ordained ministers

We encourage annual reporting of continuing education requirements for clergy

We also organize our work by creating sub-committees or working groups. This year the COM is taking on five projects that we believe are important to our common ministry. We work on these in smaller sub-committees in the time between our COM meetings and then report back for the feedback and support of the greater commission. Our five sub-committees are:

Race Task Force: The Task Force currently reports to the COM, though its membership largely comes from the wider diocesan community. The early work of the Task Force was largely internal, having difficult conversations around race and racism, to build trust and develop honesty. We are now transitioning into an exciting new chapter. The task force is curating and developing resources to help us, as a diocese, as a Church, have deeper, more honest conversations about race and the ways in which we as a Church can better promote justice and reconciliation in a time of great division. You can now access some of these resources at: <https://episcopalcolorado.org/becoming-beloved-community/>.

Better Supporting Lay Ministers: The goal of this group is to help us better recognize and support the ministries of all the baptized. This group hopes to provide robust discernment

resources for those called to lay ministries within the Church. They are considering ways to equip lay ministers to lead the Church into our evolving expressions. They are also finding ways to better connect professional lay ministers across the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

Rural Congregations: This group is exploring creative ways to better support rural and small congregations. They are investigating what is happening across the Church to sustain a rural witness. They are considering the ways in which lay and ordained ministers might work together to energize rural Episcopal communities. We are now also considering best formation practices for Lay Pastoral Leaders and the possible shape of local formation options for ordained ministers.

Discernment: The discernment group is ever refining the ordination process; they are also creating and refining the resources that support those in the process and those who walk with them through the discernment process. They skillfully and creatively met the needs of those exploring the ordination process during the current pandemic.

Diaconal Formation: Following ordination, new deacons continue to be formed into their vocational ministry. The diaconal formation group develops and provides materials to the deacons and their supervising rectors that help guide this process during the first year of diaconal ministry. The areas of formation include: liturgy, homiletics, leadership and advocacy, and the working of the parish.

Priest Compensation: In addition to setting the stipendiary compensation standards for the diocese, we are also now providing a collection of resources, available on the diocesan website, for priests and parishes that will help them better understand non-stipendiary benefits and costs, which we hope will allow for better planning and greater transparency.

Summary:

Our goal is to support the unfolding ministries the Episcopal Church in Colorado. Even in this challenging year, the incredible gifts of our lay and ordained ministers have served as a clear witness to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The work and makeup of the Commission on Ministry is changing as our Bishop discerns how this body can best serve our current and evolving needs. But what will remain unchanged is the COM's mission to best support those called to carry on the work of Jesus in this state and this world.

Thank you for entrusting me with this important ministry.

Submitted by the Rev. Jeremiah Williamson, Chair