

Report of the Commission on Ministry to the 131th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Colorado – October 3-5, 2019

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
Deacon Nancey Bookstein, St. Brigit's, Frederick
Jessica Cox, St. Mark's, Durango
The Rev. Krista Dias, Chapel of Our Saviour, Colorado Springs
Dianne Draper, Bishop's Office (*Executive Assistant*)
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
Betsy Leonard, All Saints', Battlement Mesa
The Rev. Emily Lukanich, Transfiguration, Vail
The Rev. Katie Pearson, St. John's Cathedral, Denver
Jim Rosa, St. Matthias, Monument
Lena Sewell, St. Paul, Lakewood
The Rev. Jeremiah Williamson, Grace and St. Stephen's, Colorado Springs (*Chair*)
The Canon to the Ordinary, 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. 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 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. The long-term goal, and the chapter into which we are now moving, is to curate and develop resources to help us, as a diocese, have deeper, more honest conversations about race and the ways in which we as a Church can better work for justice and reconciliation. The group is also considering the ways in which we might better raise up leaders of color throughout the diocese.

Better Supporting Lay Ministers: This group hopes to provide robust discernment resources for those called to lay ministries within the Church. They also are considering ways to lead

those who not are yet involved deeply in their congregations into deeper involvement and engagement.

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.

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 an increasingly vibrant Episcopal Church in Colorado, made up of lay and ordained ministers who love Jesus and are passionate about the callings God has placed on their lives. The Holy Spirit is moving in Colorado. The Commission on Ministry longs to support that movement.

Submitted by the Rev. Jeremiah Williamson, Chair